

TOWARDS
REFORMATION
OF THE
heart

Extracts from the beautiful teachings of
HAZRAT MAULANA YUNUS PATEL SAHEB
(RAHMATULLAHI 'ALAYH)

Title: Towards Reformation of the Heart | Book Three

Compilation of advices from the teachings of
Hazrat Maulana Yunus Patel Saheb (Rahmatullahi 'alayh)

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Foreword

*All praises are for Allah Ta'ala, the Executioner of all affairs.
'Salaat and Salaam upon the best of all Creation,
Sayyidina Muhammad (ﷺ), eternally.*

Hazrat¹ Maulana Yunus Patel Saheb (رَحْمَةُ اللَّهِ عَلَيْهِ)² was the Khalifa³ of two illustrious personalities: Hazrat Maulana Hakeem Muḥammad Akhtar Saheb (*Mudda Zilluhu*)⁴ and Hazrat Mufti Mahmood Hasan Gangohi (رَحْمَةُ اللَّهِ عَلَيْهِ), and was, himself, the mentor and spiritual guide of thousands throughout the world.

In character, Hazrat Maulana was the picture of piety and righteousness, with a heart burning with the love of Allah Ta'ala and His Beloved Rasool (ﷺ). Hazrat's sincerity and deep-hearted desire to connect people with Allah Ta'ala and His Beloved Rasool (ﷺ), was manifest in his unrelenting efforts, serving Deen and the Creation of Allah Ta'ala.

The emphasis of Hazrat's teachings was moral and spiritual reformation and purification; the central theme being the Love of Allah Ta'ala and Rasulullah (ﷺ), which is the catalyst in engendering piety. *Alḥamdulillah*, Hazrat Maulana's talks have been most instrumental in a great number of men, women and youth changing and reforming their lives in accordance to the Pleasure of Allah Ta'ala.

¹ *Hazrat* : literally means, 'the respected' . A title used when addressing a religious luminary.

² *Rahmatullah 'alayh* : 'May the mercy of Allah be upon him.' This is mentioned after the name of a religious personality who is deceased.

³ *Khalifa* : Deputy or representative of a Shaykh.

⁴ *Mudda Zilluhu* : meaning, May he live long.

Despite Hazrat Maulana's demise, Muslims, all over the world, are still benefiting tremendously from the recordings of Hazrat's programmes as well as the books of Hazrat Maulana. Many have found these a means of increasing and strengthening their *Imaan* (faith) and *Yaqeen* (conviction) in Allah Ta'ala and their love of Rasulullah (ﷺ).

This book is a compilation of Hazrat Maulana's advice and brilliant and inspiring analogies, which are found to be very effective in the process of reformation. Reading through each exposition and one is amazed at the remarkable lessons derived; each one offering 'food for thought' and wonderful incentive and encouragement for those seeking the Pleasure of Allah Ta'ala.

Most of this book was compiled in the year 1427 (2006), and was also edited by Hazrat Maulana (رحمة الله عليه).

May Allah Ta'ala make this book solely for His Pleasure, and accept the very humble effort. May He make it a *Sadaqa-e-Jaariyah* for my Shaykh⁵, as well as myself and all those who kindly contributed in its publication. May Allah Ta'ala grant us all a deep understanding of the knowledge acquired, accompanied with the '*taufeeq*' of practice on the commandments of Allah Ta'ala and the beautiful teachings of Rasulullah (ﷺ)- with sincerity and Divine acceptance.

May Allah Ta'ala grant Hazrat Maulana the best of Aakhirah.

[Ramadaan 1433 / August 2012]

⁵ *Shaykh* : Spiritual mentor and guide



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May Allah Ta'ala grant Hazrat Maulana high and lofty ranks in the Aakhirah.

[Rajab 1434 / May 2013]

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

FOREWORD

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Sayyidina Muhammad ﷺ, eternally.*

This book is a compilation of inspiring advices and lesson-giving analogies of Hazrat Maulana Yunus Patel رَحْمَةُ اللَّهِ عَلَيْهِ, which will, Insha-Allah, be found to be very effective in the process of reformation. Alhamdulillah, each discussion offers 'food for thought' and wonderful incentive and encouragement to give up sins and practise on Deen.

Hazrat Maulana رَحْمَةُ اللَّهِ عَلَيْهِ would often quote his respected Shaykh, Hazrat Maulana Hakeem Muhammad Akhtar Saheb رَحْمَةُ اللَّهِ عَلَيْهِ, saying that the Wazeefa¹ of the time is giving up sins and staying away from sins. With the tidal waves of sins and Fitan hitting the Ummah from all sides, Hazrat Maulana رَحْمَةُ اللَّهِ عَلَيْهِ made an all-out effort in the direction of Amr-bil-Ma'roof and Nahy-anil-Munkar². Hazrat Maulana had deep concern for the Ummah at large and saw potential in every person to become a Wali of Allah Ta'ala. The encouragement was always towards nurturing the love of Allah Ta'ala and Rasulullah ﷺ, giving up all sins and developing good character.

Alhamdulillah, most of this book was compiled during Hazrat

¹ Wazeefa: Prescribed form of Zikr

² Amr-bil-Ma'roof and Nahy-anil-Munkar: Enjoining what is good and forbidding what is evil

Maulana's lifetime and was also proof-read and edited by Hazrat Maulana رَحْمَةُ اللهِ عَلَيْهِ.

Despite Hazrat Maulana's passing away, Muslims, throughout the world, still benefit greatly from the teachings of Hazrat Maulana and find them to be a means of spiritual strength, guidance and goodness. The simple prescriptions and advices offer an easy recourse to get back on track, to the obedience of Allah Ta'ala and Rasulullah صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ .

May Allah Ta'ala make this book solely for His Pleasure and accept the very humble effort. May He make it a means of guidance, inspiration and steadfastness for all, and may He make it a Sadaqa-e-jaariyah (perpetual reward) for Hazrat Maulana رَحْمَةُ اللهِ عَلَيْهِ, myself and all those who kindly contributed to its publication. May Allah Ta'ala grant us the correct understanding of the knowledge acquired, accompanied with the Taufeeq of practice. May Allah Ta'ala grant us the ability to do what He loves and what He is pleased with – in word, deed and intention.

May Allah Ta'ala reward Hazrat Maulana رَحْمَةُ اللهِ عَلَيْهِ with high and lofty ranks in the Aakhirah.

Zul Hijjah 1437 / September 2016

NB.: Do not touch the Arabic script of the Aayaat (verses) of the Qur'aan Shareef if not in a state of Taharah (cleanliness) –
i.e. Wudhu, or Ghusl (if required).



IN THE NAME OF ALLAH⁶,
THE COMPASSIONATE, THE MERCIFUL.

وَالَّذِينَ آمَنُوا أَشَدُّ حُبًّا لِلَّهِ ط

“... AND THOSE WHO HAVE IMAAN⁷ ARE MORE INTENSE
IN THEIR LOVE FOR ALLAH...”

[SURAH BAQARAH 2 : 165]

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا اتَّقُوا اللَّهَ حَقَّ تَقَاتِهِ وَلَا تَمُوتُنَّ إِلَّا وَأَنْتُمْ مُسْلِمُونَ ۝

“O YOU WHO BELIEVE; FEAR ALLAH AS HE SHOULD BE FEARED AND
DIE NOT EXCEPT IN A STATE OF ISLAM⁸.”

[SURAH AAL-E-IMRAAN 3 : 102]

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا اتَّقُوا اللَّهَ وَكُونُوا مَعَ الصَّادِقِينَ ۝

“O YOU WHO BELIEVE; FEAR ALLAH AND KEEP IN THE COMPANY OF
THE SAWDIQEEN (THE TRUTHFUL ONES).”

[SURAH TAUBAH 9 : 119]

⁶ Allah : The Name of the Creator of the Universe

⁷ Imaan : Faith / Belief [To accept with the heart]

⁸ Islam : Literally means ‘Submission’.

NB.: Do not touch the Arabic script of the Aayaat (verses) of the Qur`aan Shareef if not in a state of Taharat (cleanliness) – i.e. Wudhu, or Ghusl (if required).

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Mirror Reflections

It is said: *“The room, in which there is no mirror, is worse than a prison-cell for a woman”*. ...Of course, the same can be said about many, many men, who spend hours in front of the mirror for the sole purpose of beautification.

This statement is to give us an idea as to how often a person looks into the mirror; so much so, that one will say that the mirror is indispensable.

...To look into a mirror, comb one's hair, etc. is not *Haraam* (forbidden). In fact, to do so is the *Sunnah*⁹ of Nabi (ﷺ). We will also find in the duas¹⁰ of Nabi (ﷺ), the dua when looking into a mirror:

اللَّهُمَّ أَنْتَ حَسَّنْتَ خُلُقِي فَحَسِّنْ خُلُقِي

“O Allah, You have beautified my features, so beautify my character as well.”

Even so, the mirror must not become an obsession.

The efforts made in beautifying the face and maintaining the physical body in good shape, have turned into a multi-billion dollar industry. The interest and concern is directed towards

⁹ *Sunnah* : The practice of Rasulullah (Sallallaahu ‘alayhi waSallam)

¹⁰ *Duas*: Supplications

something which will inevitably turn to dust; whereas we have not been created for just the beautification of the face and body; that from the morning until the night, the person is fixated with nothing but his physical appearance.

Be that as it may, we find that there are various kinds of mirrors : There are those mirrors that give a true and correct reflection, there are mirrors that magnify the person's features, and there are even mirrors that reflect a distorted or twisted image. ...The face may be the same, but the reflection is dependent on the type of mirror looked into.

Then again, there are times when a person's beauty is affected by other factors.

...When we traveled by train, in India, we traveled in third class coaches and sometimes long distance. Due to some of the windows of the carriage left open, or due to the windows being broken, dust would cover the carriage. We would be covered with dust from head to toe. Anyone seeing us would see a different appearance. Accordingly, certain factors, like sickness, sleep, travel, etc. have an effect on a person's appearance.

Similarly, the same can be said about our physical hearts, as well as our spiritual hearts. The spiritual heart is also not always in the same condition. In fact, the heart is called '*qalb*' in the Arabic language due to the fact that it is perpetually in a state of change.

Rasulullah (ﷺ)¹¹ explained the likeness of the heart as:
‘The heart (qalb) takes its name from its constant changes (taqallub). The likeness of the heart is that of a feather at the base of a tree, being turned over and over by the wind.’¹²

‘The heart of the son of Aadam changes more quickly than a pan of rapidly boiling water.’¹³

Just as we are conscious of maintaining the beauty of our appearance and physique, there has to be a sense of consciousness, more so, in maintaining the beauty of the spiritual heart.

As a poet aptly said:

***We looked into the mirror for blemishes on the face,
But we did not look at all the blemishes of the heart.***

The mirrors for the spiritual heart are the Qur`aan Shareef, Ahaadeeth¹⁴ of Rasulullah (ﷺ) and the advice of the Ahlullah (People of Allah).

Rasulullah (ﷺ) also informed us:

المؤمن مِرَاةُ الْمُؤْمِنِ

‘A Believer is the mirror for a Believer.’¹⁵

¹¹ ‘May Allah bless him and grant him peace’. This is mentioned after the name of the Prophet Muhammad (ﷺ).

¹² Ahmad

¹³ Tabraani

¹⁴ Ahaadeeth : Sayings of the Prophet Muhammad (Sallallaahu ‘alayhi waSallam)

¹⁵ Abu Dawud / Tirmizi/ Bukhari

Whilst a mirror discloses defects in our physique; **these mirrors disclose to us, the neglect and weakness of our spiritual hearts.** We are thus able to gauge our spiritual condition. We are able to see the blemishes of our hearts in these mirrors.

As I have said, there are some mirrors that give a magnified and enlarged reflection, or they give a distorted, twisted or skewed image – so then this is not a true and honest reflection of the person standing in front of that mirror. Similarly, there are Muslims who do not give a true reflection: If a Muslim is of bad character, and his actions are “twisted” and “distorted” due to his indulgence in sins, then he will not offer a proper reflection.

Just as we appreciate that the mirror which gives a true reflection, draws our attention to that part of our face or body that requires cleaning or improvement, we should be grateful to be afforded these spiritual mirrors – of the Qur`aan Shareef, Ahaadeeth, wise teachings of the learned, and advice of righteous and sincere Muslims – through which we can clean, improve and beautify our spiritual hearts.

If we are assuming the role of the mirror, then we should keep in mind that a good mirror only discloses weaknesses or defects. A good mirror does not criticize, exaggerate and advertise to all and sundry, another person’s weakness.

Being a “mirror” to another could also be taken to mean that a person should become righteous so that whoever sees him will be encouraged

to do good deeds; like a person who looks into a mirror, and then tries to perfect his appearance. For example : A Muslim who wears the Sunnah dressing, will Insha-Allah, be a means of guidance and encouragement to those who see him and who are not dressed accordingly. They will be more conscious of their Muslim identity, and will, Insha-Allah, adopt the correct attire. The same would follow in respect to good actions, behaviour, dealings and so forth.

If we are concerned about the beautification of our *Imaan*, we will make every effort to remove any trace of ‘unsightliness’ (i.e. pride, show, vanity, jealousy, malice, etc.) or even sins such as lying, cursing, casting evil gazes, interest, fraud and so forth.

In the beauty industry, we will find all kinds of products, together with innumerable beauticians and consultants offering various treatments and packages. There are so many different kinds of washes, scrubs, lotions and creams advertised for facial and body beauty - *detoxifying wash, day cream, night cream, nourishing cream, replenishing cream, moisturising cream* and what not.... In the spiritual industry, we will also find beauty “products”.

Just as many use detoxifying washes and scrubs to clean the skin, so should we be giving our spiritual hearts an invigorating detoxifying wash and scrub, with sincere Taubah¹⁶ and Istighfaar¹⁷.

¹⁶ *Taubah* : pledging not to return to sins in future

¹⁷ *Istighfaar* : Seeking Forgiveness

Likewise, we will find the various spiritual “lotions” and “creams” for day, night, for different conditions and for all types of situations : The duas of morning and evening, Zikrullah¹⁸, Tilawah¹⁹ of the Qur’aan Shareef, Durood Shareef²⁰, Ishraaq, Dhuhaa, Awwabeen, Tahajjud²¹ ... all of which enhance the spiritual beauty during the day and replenish it during the night.

Added to this, we should also enhance our inner beauty by ‘*applying*’ the qualities of piety, generosity, forgiveness, tolerance, patience and other virtues, like how so many women and so many men apply all kinds of creams, make-up and perfumes to enhance their physical beauty.

Furthermore, there are so many who are particular about using “Sun block” to protect themselves against the harmful effects of sun exposure, using those lotions and creams which offer, as they say, “broad spectrum UVA and UVB protection”. **Allah Ta’ala has also granted us a “Broad Spectrum Sin Protection” – and it is ‘marketed’ as “TAQWA”.**

This Taqwa blocks us from the harmful effects of **sin exposure**. It is ‘*sin-prevention*’ which we cannot remain without. The instruction in its use is simple : **Apply it generously, all over one’s heart, body and soul, for maximum protection against sins**: i.e. be conscious of Allah Ta’ala in every sphere of life.

¹⁸ *Zikrullah* : Remembrance of Allah Ta’ala

¹⁹ *Tilawah* : Recitation of the Qur’aan Shareef

²⁰ *Durood Shareef*: Seeking Allah’s Blessings on the Prophet (Sallallaahu ‘alayhi waSallam).

²¹ *Ishraaq, Dhuhaa, Awwabeen, Tahajjud* : Optional prayers

Avoiding the Ash Clouds of Sins

**Extracted from one of Hazrat Maulana's last
Informal programmes in Madina Munawwarah**

One young friend of mine, who is a pilot, recently flew to Australia. Due to the ash clouds, they were told they would not be able to take off. They were thus delayed a few days.

When he returned, I asked him : *'There was still a lot of ash. What did you'll do?'*

He said : *'They gave us a flight path whereby we could bypass the ash clouds. We took this route and we avoided the ash.'*

I then asked him : *'Did you take any lesson from that?'*

He, in turn, asked : *'What lesson?'*

I explained :

'The lesson is this : When there was a lot of ash, then there was danger that the ash-cloud would damage the engine of the Boeing you were flying. Your life was in danger and the lives of all the passengers were in danger. If you were caught in such an ash-cloud, you could have gone and the passengers could have gone. So they gave you a 'round about' route, to avoid the ash clouds and reach your destination.

The lesson we take is that when there is temptation to sin, or some fitnah²² approaching, we must avoid it. We must take a 'round about' route. If that plane crashed, the lives would have gone. However, here, if there is a 'crash' – i.e. the person falls into sin – the spiritual life – Imaan - can go.

...Some of those crashes take the person's Imaan away.

Some pretty or handsome face takes away the Imaan of a person, or some other temptation or invitation to Haraam leads to a spiritual crash. The environment of drugs, pornography, fornication and adultery, gambling, music, etc. are like those ash-clouds.

The Muslim avoids all areas of sins – whether the cinemas, clubs, theatres or other venues of vice. To whatever extent he can avoid, he avoids. He takes a 'round about' route so that he can reach his destination safely. And the destination of a Muslim is Jannah²³.

If there is a group of young girls dressed indecently and the gaze falls on them accidentally, then try and avoid an encounter with them. Don't even look again. Think that the ash clouds are approaching. ...If the person cannot lower his gaze and quickly walk pass, then he must move in another direction. Cross the street. Go over to the other side. Take another route lest he gets

²² *Fitnah* : trial / mischief

²³ *Jannah* : Paradise

caught in the ash cloud of fitnah and loses his Imaan and Akhirah²⁴.

I told this pilot friend : ‘When you are flying the plane, then you avoid the ash clouds. Avoid those clouds of fitnah as well. ...On the plane itself, there will be encounters with the air-hostesses and female passengers. At that time, guard the gaze. **You** must be an example. You must show to others : **I am a Muslim**. ...That you do not behave like the other pilots behave.’

And the same applies to all of us. We too face different ‘ash-clouds’ of fitnah – whether on the plane or train, whether at work or in the bazaars and market places, whether at school or college. How do we respond? Do we adopt Taqwa²⁵? Do we fear Allah Ta’ala? Do we take the opportunity to prove our sincere and deep love for Allah Ta’ala? Do we subscribe to ‘*Fafirroo Ilallaah*’ – i.e. we flee to Allah Ta’ala? Or do we recklessly ‘fly’ into the ash clouds of sins, unconcerned that we may be meeting our spiritual death?

There is no doubt that the environment around us is hazardous, dangerous and high-risk for our Imaan. Despite the scenario, a Muslim must be courageous. **We do have the courage. We need to only make use of that courage.**

Steer the heart and body away from those ash-clouds of fitnah if we want to reach the Hereafter safely, if we want to enter Jannah without delay; and above this, if we want to earn the Pleasure of Allah Ta’ala.

²⁴ *Aakhirah* : Hereafter

²⁵ *Taqwa* : Piety / to abstain or restrain oneself from that which is forbidden.

How do we build up this spiritual strength, whereby we avoid sins like how the pilot avoids the ash clouds, or like how we would avoid the plague?

We work on developing the quality of Ihsaan.

Rasulullah (ﷺ) explained the quality of Ihsaan as:

أَنْ تَعْبُدَ اللَّهَ كَأَنَّكَ تَرَاهُ فَإِنْ لَمْ تَكُنْ تَرَاهُ فَإِنَّهُ يَرَاكَ

“THAT YOU WORSHIP ALLAH AS IF YOU ARE SEEING HIM, AND IF YOU CANNOT SEE HIM, THEN HE SEES YOU (ANYWAY).”

The knowledge and the understanding have to be deeply impressed in the heart and mind : **“Wherever I am, my Allah is watching.”**

My Shaykh, Hazrat Maulana Hakeem Muhammad Akhtar Saheb (Daamat Barakaatuhum) says in poetry :

***“If you hide and commit sins,
Someone is watching from above (Allah Ta’ala)...”***

A Muslim works towards developing the *sifat* (attribute) of Ihsaan in all aspects of his life. It is not confined to the different forms of Ibaadah (worship), like Salaah, Fasting, etc.; rather it is a reality which should be found across the spectrum of our lives.

Unfortunately, this quality of Ihsaan – this Conscious Awareness of Allah Ta’ala - is something which is lacking in our lives. As such, we very quickly and easily lose sight of Deen and Shariah, we lose

sight of that Khauf²⁶ and Khashiyat²⁷ of Allah Ta’ala, or muhabbat (love) of Allah Ta’ala.

The moment we are occupied in the mundane activities of life, we incline towards negligence. We forget Allah Ta’ala is watching. And this ‘ghaflat’ (negligence) is the stepping stone to spoiling the harmony of life. This ‘ghaflat’ is the HEN which lays the eggs of sins.

On the other hand, if this attribute is cultivated and nurtured in all aspects of life, ...**“That you worship Allah as if you are seeing Him, and if you cannot see Him, then He sees you (anyway).”** ...then this is opening the doors of success in both worlds.

The person who has developed within himself the beautiful state of “Ihsaan” will lead a very balanced life. Temptations will come his way, but he will not fall for those temptations. The quality of Ihsaan does not mean that shaytaan will then leave him (or her) alone. Shaytaan will work harder and will continue to tempt. However, due to this Muslim’s conscious awareness of Allah Ta’ala, he will not fall for the temptations. He will resist them. And in this manner, he will also secure the Noor²⁸ of Taqwa. In this way, he becomes the friend of Allah Ta’ala.

إِنَّ أَوْلِيَاءَهُ إِلَّا الْمُتَّقُونَ

“... VERILY NONE ARE THE AULIYA (FRIENDS OF ALLAH) EXCEPT THOSE WHO REFRAIN FROM HIS DISOBEDIENCE...”

[SURAH AL-ANFAL 8 : 34]

²⁶ Khauf: Fear

²⁷ Khashiyat: awe

²⁸ Noor : Spiritual effulgence/ light

That Conscious Awareness of Allah Ta'ala makes us apply brakes and resist the temptation to sin. If we are faced with temptation, we will move away. Wherever we feel we will be tempted, then we will keep far from such areas. If an invitation to sin is extended to us, we will refuse and reject it.

Our dua is, as my Shaykh says, in poetry :

***'(O Allah) wherever I am – whether on earth or in the skies –
my Taqwa must always remain safe.'***



Formula for Unlimited Blessings

The Story of Hazrat Halima Sa`diyya (رَضِيَ اللهُ عَنْهُ), the foster mother of Rasulullah (صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ) is well-known.

The custom of the Arabs who lived in the towns was to entrust their young children in the care of the Bedouin women, who earned a living by being wet nurses. For the town Arabs, this time afforded their children the healthy environment of the desert, facilitating good health, strength and an opportunity to master the rich, untainted speech of the Bedouins.

Thus, it was the good fortune of Hazrat Halima Sa`diyya, that Rasulullah (صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ) was destined for her.

In the many books on the Seerah²⁹, we read Hazrat Halima's personal account of how she, her husband and baby travelled in the company of other women, in search of children to suckle. It was a time of famine and drought, and theirs was a state of hunger and want, to the extent that she could not even feed her baby.

On reaching Makkah Mukarramah, none of the women were prepared to accept Rasulullah (صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ) once they were told that he was an orphan. Their hope was to secure a child whose father would reward them generously.

²⁹ *Seerah* : Biography / way of life

Whilst the other women were successful in their quest, Halima was not. Before departing from Makkah Mukarramah, she decided to take the orphaned baby, rather than have none to take home.

Hazrat Halima related herself, that the moment she lifted him into her arms, she found to her great surprise, that she had sufficient milk to feed him, as well as feed her own little baby. And she thereafter related the good fortune that came their way, whilst taking care of the little Muhammad (ﷺ): Their she-camel was suddenly blessed with plentiful of milk; her lean, slow donkey was suddenly blessed with strength and speed; their barren land was blessed with plentiful of grass for their animals to feed on. And like this, prosperity filled their home due to the presence and blessings of Rasulullah (ﷺ).

Reflecting over this, we learn so much: Just the physical body of Nabi (ﷺ) coming into the arms of Hazrat Halima as a little baby, caused such blessings to pour into their lives.

Nabi (ﷺ) was not able to give lengthy speeches in the arms of Hazrat Halima; nor was his character, his dealings, his relationships with people, his honesty and his truthfulness, his charity and his sincerity, his nobility and forgiveness, and other beautiful characteristics apparent at that time, when she took the little baby into her arms. At that stage, it was only the physical body of Nabi (ﷺ) as a baby ... yet look at the tremendous Barakah.

Blessings in their lives, in their home, in their time, in their animals and crops, in their food... Blessings in everything.

If so much of Barakah came with just lifting and carrying the physical body of Nabi (ﷺ), then what would we say about the Barakaat and the blessings that a person will see and experience in his own life, if he has to implement the teachings and character of Nabi (ﷺ)?

What kind of blessings will the Ummah of Rasulallah (ﷺ) experience if they have to bring into their lives, the beautiful Sunnah?

We will experience the same Barakaat that Allah Ta'ala gave to Hazrat Halima and thereafter what became even more manifest in the lives of the Companions of Nabi (ﷺ).

Look at their condition: Most of the Sahaba-e-Kiraam (رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُمْ) were extremely poor, undergoing extreme difficulties, tests and trials. But with the implementation of the teachings of Nabi (ﷺ) in their lives, look at the Barakaat that Allah Ta'ala gave to them: The Persian Empire at their feet, the Roman Empire at their feet – something that could not be even imagined at one time, but the Prophecies of Nabi (ﷺ) were seen and experienced by them.

Of course they did not just sit and do nothing. They did what they had to do - they fulfilled their part of the contract. They performed their Salaah, they gave their Zakaah, they kept their fasts, they performed Hajj if it was Fardh, they were kind, they

were charitable, they were honest, they were truthful; each one brought the beautiful, noble character of Nabi (ﷺ) in his or her life. ...They went forth in Jihad with Nabi (ﷺ), and after his demise also, they spread the message of Islam and the teachings of Rasulullah (ﷺ) in the world – and then look at the Barakaat that came pouring into their lives... “*Barakaat minas samaa’i wal ardh*” (Blessings from the heavens and the earth).

Thus, if we look at that incident of Hazrat Halima Sa`diyya (رضى الله عنها), and the blessings of just taking Rasulullah (ﷺ) into her arms as a baby, then we draw the lesson: **Blessings are sure to follow, in abundance, if we only bring into our lives the beautiful Sunnah of Rasulullah (ﷺ).**

So simple.

Let those who wish to enjoy blessings, bring alive the Sunnah.



4

Fashion

Fashion is a test of the very severe kind. In fact, it is a madness and an obsession that has afflicted many. It makes a person blind, except to the chase of keeping up with the latest fashion trends, styles and designs; which are ever changing.

Have we ever stopped to think that one day, very soon, we will leave this world wrapped in a simple *kafan* (shroud), the pattern and style of which has remained the same and will always remain as is?

How senseless it is to make fashion the '*be all and the end all*' of our lives, when the inescapable occasion of death calls for just one *kafan*, **with no designer names or brand labels.**

Hazrat Maulana Jalaluddeen Rumi (رَحْمَةُ اللَّهِ عَلَيْهِ) makes plain this reality :

***The world is 'darul ghuroor' - A world of deception
The day man is delivered to his grave,
Nothing except his shroud accompanies him***

Since some people would have even competed in giving a costly *kafan*, Rasulullah (صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ) said : "*Do not be extravagant in shrouding, for it will be quickly decayed.*"³⁰

³⁰ Abu Dawood

Hazrat Abu Bakr Siddiq (رَضِيَ اللهُ عَنْهُ) had stated before his demise: *‘...New clothes befit the living and old clothes befit the decaying body.’* This does not mean that new material must not be used for the *kafan*; rather it was said to prevent any kind of “competition” and differentiation in the *kafan* of rich from poor.

To wear good clothes, eat fine food and live well is not Haraam (forbidden), if the earnings are Halaal (lawful) and our obligations to the poor and needy are also met.

Many Muslims do not fulfil the obligation of Zakaah³¹ and Sadaqaat³² which is binding upon them, thus denying the poor and needy what rightfully belongs to them. This is a very major sin and the punishment is very severe.

Whilst it is permissible to live well, it is not acceptable to be lavish, exceeding all bounds of Islamic guidelines, ignoring the plight and the dire circumstances of the poor and needy. Many are without employment, food and even homes – more especially in these times wherein inflation has gone through the roof, and a loaf of bread and a litre of milk are beyond the means of the poor. We should be considerate and remember that we will be questioned about our expenditure on the Day of Qiyaamah³³.

...What has to be understood is that we must not become slaves of passion and fashion, nor should our dressing be a source of

³¹ *Zakaah*: An obligatory form of charity, due upon those who have a certain amount of wealth, to give to the poor and needy. This is a pillar of Islam. (Details can be found in books of Jurisprudence)

³² *Sadaqaat* : Other forms of charity.

³³ *Qiyaamah* : Resurrection

pride and arrogance.

It is within acceptable limits to wear beautiful clothes, out of appreciation for the wealth bestowed upon us. A Hadeeth makes mention : **“Allah loves to see the effects of His blessing on His slave.”**³⁴

Another Hadeeth states: **“Allah is Beautiful and loves beauty. Pride means denying the truth and looking down on people.”**³⁵

Allah Ta’ala highlights this outward adornment as a Divine Blessing, but categorically states that the best adornment is the adornment of righteousness.

يَبْنِيْ اٰدَمَ قَدْ اَنْزَلْنَا عَلَيْكُمْ لِبَاسًا يُّوَارِيْ سَوْآتِكُمْ وَرِيشًا ط وَلِبَاسُ التَّقْوٰى لَا
ذٰلِكَ خَيْرٌ ط ذٰلِكَ مِنْ اٰيٰتِ اللّٰهِ لَعَلَّكُمْ يَذَكَّرُوْنَ ۝

“O CHILDREN OF ADAM! WE HAVE BESTOWED CLOTHING UPON YOU TO COVER YOURSELVES AND AS AN ADORNMENT, AND THE CLOTHING OF RIGHTEOUSNESS, THAT IS THE BEST. SUCH ARE AMONG THE SIGNS OF ALLAH, THAT THEY MAY RECEIVE ADMONITION.”

[SURAH AL-A’RAAF 7:26]

Thus, our clothing and accessories should not become the medium of us falling prey to the deadly diseases of *takabbur* (pride), *ujub* (vanity) and *riyaa* (show and ostentation), as is so common today.

³⁴ Tirmizi

³⁵ Sahih Muslim

We have been cautioned in the Hadeeth in regards to even the **intention** behind our dressing : **“Whoever wears garments for fame, Allah will clothe him with the garment of disgrace.”** ³⁶

It is this diversion and game of “fashion” which literally gulps and swallows Muslim money and opens the doors of wastage, extravagance, rivalry, living beyond one’s means, purchasing on interest; and being negligent of the purpose of this worldly life.

There is great ease and comfort in simple living without being shackled by the need to change with changing designs and fashion. ***Simplicity is a part of Imaan*** ³⁷ and

وَلِبَاسُ التَّقْوَىٰ لَا ذَلِكَ خَيْرٌ ط

‘THE DRESS OF RIGHTEOUSNESS - THAT IS THE BEST.’

[SURAH AL-A’RAAF 7 : 26]

There are those who use the *Ahaadeeth* on neatness, *Taharah* ³⁸ and so forth, as justification for modern day lavishness; whereas fashion, lavishness and extravagance are very different from neatness and good grooming.

Hazrat Khwaja Azizul Hasan Majzoob (رَحْمَةُ اللَّهِ عَلَيْهِ) very aptly stated :

You are always concerned : ‘I must remain above all.

My fashion and beautification must excel all.’

Is this how one who is going to die, lives ?

The outward beauty of the world has deceived you.

³⁶ Abu Dawood

³⁷ Abu Dawood

³⁸ *Taharah* : purity / cleanliness

Family Ties

Allah Ta'ala holds back His *Rahmah* (mercy) from those who break family ties.

If the tie is broken solely for the pleasure of Allah Ta'ala; for some **legitimate Islamic reason**, then to do so would not be a sin.

However, we who are the slaves of our egos and nafs should be careful that shaytaan does not instigate us to sever family ties in the name of Deen³⁹, whereas it is, in reality, for the sake of our nafs⁴⁰. As a result of breaking ties, the entire family – in truth, the entire community suffers. Allah Ta'ala holds back His blessings.

Hazrat Abdullah Ibn Abi Aufa (رضى الله عنه) had related that in the evening of the Day of Arafah, the Sahaba (رضى الله عنهم) were sitting with Nabi (صلى الله عليه وسلم) when he announced: *'Anyone who has broken his relationship with any of his kin, should leave the company and not sit with us.'*

ONLY ONE man got up and left... clearly illustrating that the Sahaba-e-Kiraam (رضى الله عنهم) upheld and preserved family ties.

The man returned after some time and informed Nabi (صلى الله عليه وسلم) that on hearing the order, he immediately went to

³⁹ *Deen* : religion

⁴⁰ *Nafs* : ego

his aunt with whom he had severed ties. He explained to her the instruction of Rasulullah (ﷺ). On hearing it, she made a dua of forgiveness for him, and he for her, and they reconciled. Rasulullah (ﷺ) was extremely pleased, allowed him to rejoin their company, and explained to his companions that **Allah Ta'ala does not grant His blessings on a community among whom there is someone who has broken off family ties.**

If we have to consider our times, then in almost all cases it is because the ego has been hurt by the snubbing or bad attitude of relatives that causes the break up. As Muslims, we should be good to our relatives, even if they are unkind to us. The Hadeeth states :

***'He who reciprocates good treatment does not really strengthen family bonds; but the one, who through kind behaviour, strengthens his ties of kinship with those who sever relations with him, does so.'*⁴¹**

Whilst visiting another country on a lecture tour, a brother met me and said to me that he has elderly parents, whom he is taking care of. However, from their side, there is no appreciation. He keeps serving them and giving to them, but there is no expression of gratitude.

His brother visits the parents 'once in a blue moon' and brings a gift; and for this, the parents sing this son's praises. And yet, this is the son who seldom gives them his time and hardly ever serves

⁴¹ Bukhari and Tirmizi

them. So the brother said that this was eating him up, that he is doing so much, but the attention and appreciation is going to the brother.

I replied to him: ***“Remember just one simple thing, and all this disappointment and these frustrations will disappear:***

***“DO FOR ALLAH’S PLEASURE
HE WILL GIVE FROM HIS TREASURE.”***

Simple ...and see how, despite their ingratitude and inattention, you will find tremendous happiness in the sacrifices you make for your parents. And Allah Ta’ala will show you His happiness in various bounties, on your sincerity and service to your parents.”

Alhamdulillah, the brother was extremely thankful for this piece of advice and was already happy with the great honour and privilege of serving his parents.



6

The Rose Garden

One of my uncles is an artist. Amongst his paintings, he had a picture of a rose held in a hand. The thorn from that rose flower had injured the person's thumb and blood trickled down that thumb.

In 1969, when I returned home, after 7 years in India, he asked me to choose any painting. I chose this particular one, since it conveyed a message with deep meaning. ...What is the message?

Don't think that there is no danger in the rose garden. That garden may be filled with all kinds of charming, colourful and fragrant rose flowers, but don't go in, thinking that there is no danger.

Beneath the petals of those beautiful, fragrant and sweet smelling flowers are thorns. Safeguard yourself and your garments when you walk through that garden, for those thorns cannot be trusted. They could cause you injury.

This world is like that beautiful garden. Smell the fragrance – i.e. make use of the things of the world. Use and enjoy everything *Halaal*⁴², but beware of sins... the thorns of sins. These cannot be trusted, for these will definitely cause harm and injury. So do not fall for the temptation to touch, see, hear, speak or walk towards Haraam.

⁴² *Halaal* : Lawful

The thorns of **sins** not only scratch and wound our bodies, they also pierce, damage and mar our delicate Imaan. The detrimental consequence of these thorns can even lead to ruin in the Hereafter. How many have lost their health, to Aids and other such diseases? How many have forsaken their religion for a beautiful or handsome face, or some wealth, power, name – at the great cost of their salvation in the Hereafter?

The message conveyed by this picture is that we need to take the walk of life, through the garden of this world, with caution and care. *This caution and care is what is termed **Taqwa**⁴³.*

It has been mentioned that once Hazrat ‘Umar (رضى الله عنه) asked Hazrat Ubayy bin Ka’b (رضى الله عنه): ‘What is **Taqwa**?’

He, in turn, asked : ‘*Did you have the experience of walking through thorny shrub?*’

Hazrat ‘Umar (رضى الله عنه) replied : ‘Yes.’

Hazrat Ubayy bin Ka’b (رضى الله عنه) asked : ‘*How did you walk ?*’

Hazrat ‘Umar (رضى الله عنه) replied : ‘*I rolled up my garment and walked very carefully and cautiously, so as not to be harmed by the thorns.*’

Hazrat Ubayy bin Ka’b (رضى الله عنه) responded : ‘*That is Taqwa.*’

⁴³ *Taqwa* : Piety / to abstain or restrain oneself from that which is forbidden

Powerful Detergents

There are many laboratories in the world, working and specializing in detergents. Each one trying to produce the best detergent, which would be the easiest in removing stains.

Each company makes a claim that their detergents are the best, giving you a power-cleaning wash and removing the toughest stains.

In the spiritual world, we find that the spiritual heart is such a sensitive entity that is easily stained. Some stains are easy to remove; others are very difficult to do away with.

Thus, the spiritual heart also requires detergents for the heart to remain ***‘whiter than white’, ‘brighter than bright’*** or ***‘super bright’*** – as we read in different advertisements.

Those stains of the spiritual heart (i.e. one’s minor sins) which are easy to remove, are washed away with the water of Wudhu (ablution), with Salaah and with many different Ibaadaat, which the Ahaadeeth have informed us, have the effect of removing the stains of sins.

Rasulullah (ﷺ) said : ***‘Whoever performed Wudhu and performed it well (i.e. according to the prescribed rules), all his sins will go out, even from under his nails.’***⁴⁴

⁴⁴ Muslim

Rasulullah (ﷺ) said: ***‘Each of the five Salaahs expiates the sins committed since the Salaah preceding it.’***⁴⁵

The ‘Ulama mention that Ahaadeeth of this nature refer to minor sins. **Major sins require sincere Taubah.**

Major sins leave ‘tough’ stains which require a hard wash with a very strong detergent. The power detergents, which have the effect of removing the big and unsightly blotches and splotches of major sins on the spiritual heart are **sincere Taubah and Istighfaar**, and if one wants a bright, white spiritual heart, then the ‘bleach’ of Zikrullah should be used – just as we use bleach to whiten garments.

Of course, the effect upon our hearts is dependent on our sincerity, our abstinence from all sins, as well as our obedience to Allah Ta’ala and Rasulullah (ﷺ).

If the stains of major sins are not removed, then the heart not only becomes pitch black, it becomes hard, and at this stage the person’s Imaan is on dangerous ground.

Allah Ta’ala mentions in the Qur’aan Shareef :

كَأَلَّا بِلْ سِرَّانَ عَلَى قُلُوبِهِمْ مَا كَانُوا يَكْسِبُونَ

**“NO! BUT THAT WHICH THEY USED TO COMMIT HAS COVERED THEIR
HEARTS WITH RUST...”**

[SURAH MUTTAFFIFEEN 83 : 14]

⁴⁵ Muslim

The rust that accumulates with indulgence in sins covers the heart and deprives the person of the ability to distinguish between good and bad, right and wrong, *Haq* (Truth) and *Baatil* (Falsehood).

Rasulullah (ﷺ) explained : ***“When a Mu’min (believer) sins, a black dot appears on his heart. If he repents and seeks Allah’s forgiveness, his heart becomes cleansed and polished. If he continues to commit more and more sins (without repenting), the spot continues to spread and ultimately covers all of his heart.”***⁴⁶



⁴⁶ Tirmizi

Durood Shareef

During a visit to Madina Munawwarah⁴⁷, I was sitting in the courtyard, on the marble floor outside Masjidun Nabawi⁴⁸ (ﷺ), near the Raudha Mubarak⁴⁹. I was looking at the Green Dome, and in deep thought. A doctor, from Johannesburg, walked by. After greeting me with Salaam, he asked me as to what I was watching.

I replied : *‘The flights coming into Madina Shareef.’*

He replied : *‘No planes are permitted to fly in the vicinity of the Haram Shareef’⁵⁰.*

I explained : ***‘The flights are the flights of the angels, who have collected the Durood⁵¹ and Salaam⁵² of millions of Muslims, throughout the world, and who are now conveying these to Rasulullah (ﷺ).’***

The Hadeeth Shareef mentions : ***‘Verily Allah has certain angels wandering all over the earth. They convey to me the Salaat of my Ummah.’⁵³***

⁴⁷ Madina Munawwarah : The Enlightened City

⁴⁸ Masjidun Nabawi (ﷺ) : The Sacred Mosque of the Prophet (ﷺ).

⁴⁹ Raudha Mubarak : Blessed garden (in reference to the Prophet’s (ﷺ) grave)

⁵⁰ Haram Shareef : The Holy Mosque of the Prophet (ﷺ)

⁵¹ Durood/Salaat : Seeking Allah’s Blessings on the Prophet (ﷺ).

⁵² Salaam : Salutation to the Prophet (ﷺ).

⁵³ Nasa’ee

...This should not be difficult to understand in this day and age of advanced technology. Thousands of people are making phone calls to people in different cities and countries of the world. Within seconds, there is a connection and the person is able to speak.

Rasulullah's (ﷺ) *Ihsaan* (favour) upon us is tremendous. Durood Shareef should therefore become our daily practice as it develops that connection with Nabi (ﷺ).

Using the remarkable gift of imagination, one should imagine the angels conveying one's Durood Shareef in the court of Rasulullah (ﷺ), or imagine standing before the *Raudha Mubarak* and personally presenting Salaat and Salaam to the Master of all men, the Seal of all the Prophets, the Crown of the Believers, the Illuminator of the universe, the Leader of the pious, the Protector and Guide of the Believers and the Beloved of Allah Ta'ala, Sayyidina⁵⁴ Muhammad (ﷺ).

This noble and lofty *Ibaadah*⁵⁵ of conveying Salaat and Salaam with sincerity, attention and meditation will create a '*kaifiyyat*' or special feeling within the heart as well as gain one the *Qurb*⁵⁶ of Allah Ta'ala, since Rasulullah (ﷺ) is the Beloved of Allah Ta'ala.

⁵⁴ *Sayyidina* : Our Leader

⁵⁵ *Ibaadah* : Worship

⁵⁶ *Qurb* : proximity, nearness.

Moreover, the person who conveys Salaat and Salaam becomes the beneficiary to many, many bounties, in this world and the next. Some of these are :

- Sins are forgiven,
- Stages elevated in the hereafter,
- Protection from Jahannum,
- Protection from harm,
- Intercession of Rasulullah (ﷺ),
- Securing the pleasure of Allah Ta'ala,
- Attracting blessings in wealth,
- Dispelling poverty

Durood Shareef also draws the *Rahmah* (mercy) of Allah Ta'ala and invites *Barakah* (blessings) into our homes, businesses, and lives, as well as grants relief from various anxieties.

Through the recitation of Durood Shareef, our duas (supplications) are also accepted, Insha-Allah.



Students and Bay'ah

In the past, students of Deen applied themselves fully and completely to their studies. Thereafter, they became *bay'ah*⁵⁷ and traversed the path to Allah Ta'ala (Sulook). All their time was fully occupied with studies. There was no such 'free' time to pass. Their studies were their *Ibaadah* and *Mujahadah*⁵⁸.

In these days, *fitnahs* are crashing upon the Ummah⁵⁹, like an avalanche. Students have more free time. This free time gives shaytaan and nafs the opportunity to lead them into all kinds of sins. Many students of Deen have become toys for nafs and shaytaan: Just the cell phone alone has become the means of trapping them in illicit relationships, pornography and other vices. What then of the other *fitnahs* that they are exposed to?

...Due to the deficiency in '*tarbiyyah*'⁶⁰ and the general indifference by students, in respect to practicing on their *Ilm* (knowledge), the Mashaa'ik of the time accept students for *bay'ah*.

Our students of Deen need to seriously consider submitting themselves to a Shaykh who is "kaamil"⁶¹ and with whom there is "*munasabat*" (compatibility). They should thereafter keep his

⁵⁷ *Bay'ah* : Pledging Allegiance

⁵⁸ *Mujahadah* : Striving

⁵⁹ *Ummah* : Community of Muslims

⁶⁰ *Tarbiyyah* : nurturing/ guiding

⁶¹ *Kaamil (Shaykh)* : An experienced, learned, practicing, pious Shaykh

company, benefit from his guidance and advice, and strive to complete the process of Islaah (reformation) and Tazkiyah (purification), under such a Shaykh. This will make them ‘Ulama in the true sense of the word.

Otherwise we just have mass production of ‘Ulama, but very little “haqeeqat”⁶² of years of knowledge. Titles have become so cheap, that they have become a crying shame and embarrassment for the Ummah. ...Emphasis is given to titles and accolades, whereas attention should be directed towards Islaah and Tazkiyah.



⁶² *Haqeeqat* : reality

Qasms

Taking a Qasm (Oath) in the name of Allah Ta’ala has become all too common in these days. Qasms are taken for almost anything and everything, and often, over trivial matters – so much so that many take a Qasm and lie – (نَعُوذُ بِاللَّهِ مِنْ ذَلِكَ)⁶³

What has happened, is that we have ‘reduced’ the greatness of taking a Qasm in the name of Allah Ta’ala.

A Qasm⁶⁴ should only be taken if necessary.

Taking a Qasm is not to be treated in the light hearted manner that we do, or as a joke – that any little thing or on petty and silly issues, a person utters some oath, and sometimes many, many times in a day. **It becomes a mockery of the name of Allah Ta’ala.**

If a person has to break an oath or do something contrary to his oath, then he will have to give ‘*kaffarah*’.

- Kaffarah comprises of feeding 10 persons with two meals each. Alternatively, he could give some dry groceries to each poor person.

⁶³ (نَعُوذُ بِاللَّهِ مِنْ ذَلِكَ) *Na-oozu Billahi min zaalik* : We seek Allah’s protection from that.

⁶⁴ It is a major sin to take an oath in the name of anyone other than Allah Ta’ala.

- He also has the option of giving some clothing to 10 poor persons. The clothing must be such that it can cover a major portion of the poor person's body.
- If a person is poor and is unable to fulfill the requirements of Kaffarah, he will have to fast for 3 days consecutively.⁶⁵



⁶⁵ There are many more masaa'il (rules) relating to Oaths, Vows and Kaffarah. Refer to the Beheshti Zewar or a reliable kitaab of Jurisprudence or find out details from an Aalim.

Leashing the Nafs

Whilst taking a walk through a park one morning, accompanied by some friends, we passed by a sign which is generally found in many parks. It read :

**NO DOGS ALLOWED
EXCEPT ON LEASH**

Considering a deeper meaning to the sign, I mentioned to my companions: *Our nafs (ego) is akin to a dog. The nature of an undisciplined, unleashed dog is that it will run behind people, barking and frightening them, relieve itself anywhere, devastate and lay waste the delicate flower beds as it tramples them, spoil people's picnics, etc. Without its leash and without training, it can scare, harm and bite others, as well as cause damage. Therefore the Parks Board insists that dogs be on leash.*

A dog, well trained, will obediently remain on leash, under the control of its master and will not cause inconvenience or damage. It will walk alongside its master and do as he commands.

The temperament of the nafs (carnal self/ego) is like that of the dog. It also needs to be disciplined and trained, and it also requires a leash. This leash is the leash of Shariah, the love and fear of Allah Ta'ala, and fear of accountability on the Day of Judgment, tied tightly and securely around its neck.

Without this leash, the person will break the commands of Allah Ta'ala and violate the rights of creation. The person will steal, gamble, fornicate, suppress, oppress, abuse the spouse, children or parents, and perpetrate various other crimes. Malice, greed, jealousy, pride and other filthy, vile qualities will also be found in the person's heart. People will distance themselves from such a person for fear of being harmed or troubled.

The person who has disciplined his nafs and controls it with the leash of Shariah, will find that it becomes submissive and compliant to the instructions of its Master. The person then finds it easy to fulfill the rights of Allah Ta'ala as well as creation, since the nafs is now compliant to its Master's commands. The person will want to do good deeds, assist people and invite others to Deen. ...He will not cause harm to people; rather he will benefit them. People will then love such a person.

When there is a need to go to the shops, factories, airports, hospitals, etc., the person will first leash the nafs with the *Khauf* (fear) and love of Allah Ta'ala and then go about the fulfillment of duties.

Nabi (ﷺ) said : **“The intelligent one is he who suppresses his desires and practises for what is after death, and the foolish one is he who makes his nafs follow its desires and (he) places (baseless) hope on Allah.”**⁶⁶

⁶⁶ Tirmizi

Why the suffering?

Many ask the question : *Why is the Ummah suffering so much, despite millions making dua throughout the world, and millions making dua during Haj and Umrah? Why is there no change?*

The answer can be understood by way of an analogy :

A son is disobedient and rebellious towards his father's instructions, and arrogant in his stance against his father, demanding, swearing, abusing and adopting the bad behaviour as found common in this day and age. The father is deeply hurt, offended and angered and when he has had enough of the insolence and arrogance, he finally resorts to breaking off ties with his son. He cuts off all privileges.

Now, if the entire family, even the entire community, tells that father : *"Forgive him. He is your son..."*

That father will respond : *"I have no problem with forgiving him. All he has to say is, "I'm sorry", and I will forgive him."*

However, on being encouraged to humble himself and ask for forgiveness, the son retorts with arrogance: *'Why must I? Why do I need to? I'm independent! I don't need him!'*

Then will that father forgive that son? Will he grant the privileges of money, car, etc.?

Similarly, the Auliya Allah⁶⁷, the Sawliheen (the pious) and so many more are making dua for the Ummah. ...In fact, if all the Auliya Allah were to gather on the Day of Arafaat and earnestly pray for the Ummah, Allah Ta'ala will most assuredly be prepared to forgive. However, from our side, there is a step to be taken – and this is what the majority are not prepared to do: They are not prepared to take the step of **“CHANGE”**.

Allah Ta'ala's doors are ever-open. Allah wants us to become His. He wants to forgive us and shower His infinite Mercies and Blessings upon us, but we are not prepared to take the step of obedience, the step that will secure His Forgiveness and Pleasure.

Unfortunately, the majority do not want to sincerely repent from their sins, let alone acknowledge their sins. Many justify and reason their sins, even dispute and argue regarding Allah Ta'ala's Commandments, as if they have some kind of authority over Allah Ta'ala (تَعُوذُ بِاللَّهِ). So many are brazen in their indulgence in sins, as if challenging Allah Ta'ala, like that arrogant son : *“What can You do? I'm not in need of You!”* (تَعُوذُ بِاللَّهِ مِنْ ذَلِكَ)

With this kind of behaviour and attitude, can we expect any favours, any privileges or any kind of assistance from Allah Ta'ala? We are living in a fool's paradise if we think that we can continue sinning and still be recipient of Allah Ta'ala's bounties and aid.

⁶⁷ Auliya Allah : Friends of Allah Ta'ala

If we truly want Allah Ta'ala's assistance, then we have to give up sins.

Many, many are not even fulfilling the Fardh Injunctions – Salaah, Zakaah, Fasting in the month of Ramadaan, etc., and there are others who naively depend on wazeefas to solve their problems, not prepared to give up sins. This is sheer foolishness. **Wazeefas and taweezes are no barrier against the azaab of Allah Ta'ala, when there is indulgence and persistence in sins.**

Then we have those Muslims who, in the face of natural disasters, war, genocide, etc. begin to question the existence of God or ask as to where is Allah Ta'ala's Mercy and Compassion, or ask if He is seeing all that is happening. (نَعُوذُ بِاللَّهِ).

Allah Ta'ala is not blind or deaf. He does not want chaos. Allah Ta'ala wants peace. However we have to fulfill the conditions of the contract. The first condition is that we become Believers who are 'kaamil' (perfect). If we implement Deen in our lives, adopt Taqwa and follow the noble example of Rasulullah (صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ) then the conditions will change.

The Day the Ummah fulfills its duties, across the board – making a total change, then our suffering will be replaced with success, prosperity and happiness and people of other faiths will also accept Islam.

Allah Ta'ala explicitly spells out His conditions and His promises:

وَعَدَ اللَّهُ الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا مِنْكُمْ وَعَمِلُوا الصَّالِحَاتِ لَيَسْتَخْلِفَنَّهُمْ
 فِي الْأَرْضِ كَمَا اسْتَخْلَفَ الَّذِينَ مِنْ قَبْلِهِمْ ^ص
 وَلَيُمَكِّنَنَّ لَهُمْ دِينَهُمُ الَّذِي ارْتَضَى لَهُمْ وَلَيُبَدِّلَنَّهُمْ مِنْ ^ط بَعْدِ خَوْفِهِمْ أَمْنًا
 يَعْبُدُونَنِي لَا يُشْرِكُونَ بِي شَيْئًا ^ط وَمَنْ كَفَرَ بَعْدَ ذَلِكَ فَأُولَئِكَ هُمُ الْفَاسِقُونَ ۝

“ALLAH HAS PROMISED, TO THOSE AMONG YOU WHO BELIEVE AND PERFORM RIGHTEOUS DEEDS, THAT HE WILL, OF SURETY, GRANT THEM IN THE LAND, INHERITANCE (OF POWER), AS HE GRANTED IT TO THOSE BEFORE THEM; THAT HE WILL ESTABLISH IN AUTHORITY THEIR RELIGION – THE ONE WHICH HE HAS CHOSEN FOR THEM; AND THAT HE WILL CHANGE (THEIR STATE), AFTER THE FEAR IN WHICH THEY (LIVED), TO ONE OF SECURITY AND PEACE: ‘ THEY WILL WORSHIP ME (ALONE) AND NOT ASSOCIATE ANYONE WITH ME.’ IF ANY DO REJECT FAITH AFTER THIS, THEY ARE REBELLIOUS AND WICKED.”

وَأَقِيمُوا الصَّلَاةَ وَآتُوا الزَّكَاةَ وَاطِيعُوا الرِّسُولَ لَعَلَّكُمْ تُرْحَمُونَ ۝

“SO ESTABLISH SALAAH (PRAYER) AND GIVE REGULAR CHARITY (ZAKAAH); AND OBEY THE MESSENGER THAT YOU MAY RECEIVE MERCY.”

[Surah Noor 24 : 55 / 56]

Thus, we will have to fulfill our pledge by making the effort to obey Allah Ta’ala and His Rasul (ﷺ), to see the fruit of our duas and receive the assistance of Allah Ta’ala – on an individual level, on a national level, and on an international level.



The Final Taste

There is an incident related of a Sahabi (رضي الله عنه), who, on coming across the verse:

كُلُّ نَفْسٍ ذَائِقَةُ الْمَوْتِ قَفْ

‘EVERY SOUL SHALL TASTE OF DEATH.’

[SURAH AL-AMBIYAA 21 : 35]

...read it so many times that a voice was finally heard saying:
‘Your recitation has already caused the death of 4 Jinn.’

In Arabic, the word, ‘*zaa`iqa*’ means ‘to taste’.

We should connect this *ayah* (verse) with what we understand of ‘taste’. Sometimes the taste is bitter, sometimes it is sweet, and sometimes it is bitter-sweet. We have sugar-coated pills because everyone wants to taste sweetness. Everyone wants a taste of enjoyment.

Our beloved Allah Ta’ala is informing us of the final taste of this worldly life and that taste is the taste of death.

Death is an indisputable reality and each one has to experience it. So Allah Ta’ala tells us :

كُلُّ نَفْسٍ ذَائِقَةُ الْمَوْتِ قَفْ

“EVERY NAFS SHALL TASTE OF DEATH .”

[SURAH AL-AMBIYAA 21 : 35]

Since the taste of death is a must for everyone that enters into this world, **we need to work on developing our spiritual appetite for death.**

If we want sweetness in death, then our actions will have to be sweet. ...I do not think we need to even ask if there is anyone that would like a death which is ‘bitter’.

Hazrat Maulana Yusuf (رَحْمَةُ اللَّهِ عَلَيْهِ) delivered his last bayaan (talk) in Lahore, Pakistan. It was during this talk that he had a heart attack, and it was on the way to the hospital that he passed away. He was only in his 40s, so his death was very sudden and unexpected.

A woman, who was deeply grieved over his death, had a dream, in which she saw Hazrat Maulana Yusuf (رَحْمَةُ اللَّهِ عَلَيْهِ). She asked him: ‘*How did you pass away?*’

He replied : *“The Tajalli⁶⁸ of Allah Ta’ala was so intense whilst giving that talk, that I could not bear it. A beautiful rose was then brought to me and as I smelt it, my soul departed.”*

A few days later, Maulana Umar Palanpuri (رَحْمَةُ اللَّهِ عَلَيْهِ) who was a close friend of Maulana Yusuf (رَحْمَةُ اللَّهِ عَلَيْهِ), saw him in a dream and asked him : ‘Did you meet Rasulullah (صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ) ?’

⁶⁸ *Tajalli* : Special Mercy

He replied : ‘Yes. Come I will also take you.’ – and in the dream, he takes Maulana Umar Palanpuri (رَحْمَةُ اللَّهِ عَلَيْهِ) with.

This is what we call **“sweetness” of death.**

To make our death sweet, we will have to make our a’maal (actions) sweet. We cannot expect roses and flowers to grow, if we plant thorns.

If we do A`maal-e-Sawleha (righteous deeds), then Allah Ta’ala promises a pleasurable life (*Hayaatan Tawayyibah*) together with success in the next life.

مَنْ عَمِلَ صَالِحًا مِّنْ ذَكَرٍ أَوْ أَنَّىٰ وَهُوَ مُؤْمِنٌ فَلَنُحْيِيَنَّهٗ حَيٰوةً طَيِّبَةً ۖ
وَلَنَجْزِيَنَّهُمْ أَجْرَهُمْ بِأَحْسَنِ مَا كَانُوا يَعْمَلُونَ ۝

“WHOEVER DOES RIGHTEOUSNESS, WHETHER MALE OR FEMALE, WHILE HE IS A BELIEVER - WE WILL SURELY CAUSE HIM TO LIVE A GOOD LIFE, AND WE WILL SURELY GIVE THEM THEIR REWARD (IN THE HEREAFTER) ACCORDING TO THE BEST OF WHAT THEY USED TO DO.”

[SURAH AN-NAHL : 97]

If not, then read the incidents of the nations of the past and the bitter ends they met. ...Allah Ta’ala protect us all.



The Disease of the Spiritual Heart

Allah Ta'ala has stated in the Qur'aan Shareef :

إِنَّ أَكْرَمَكُمْ عِنْدَ اللَّهِ أَتْقَى ط

**“VERILY THE MOST HONOURED OF YOU IN THE SIGHT OF ALLAH IS
(HE WHO IS) THE MOST RIGHTEOUS OF YOU...” .**

[SURAH HAJURAT 49 : 13]

Rasulullah (ﷺ) also said : ***“Verily Allah does not look towards your physical appearances, or towards your riches; but He sees (the sincerity of) your hearts, and (the nature of) your deeds.”***⁶⁹

Allah Ta'ala does not look at our bank balances, our properties, our beauty, the colour of our skin, our physique, our lineage, our language, our gender, or the chain of degrees we may have obtained. **Allah Ta'ala looks at the heart. The discrimination is only on *Taqwa***⁷⁰.

Rasulullah (ﷺ) said : ***“Nearest and dearest to me are those who possess the virtue of piety (no matter what colour, race or nationality).”***⁷¹

⁶⁹ Muslim

⁷⁰ *Taqwa* : piety / abstention from all sins.

⁷¹ Ahmad

Hazrat Abu Zarr (رَضِيَ اللهُ عَنْهُ) narrated that Rasulullah (صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ) had said to him: ***“Verily you are not better than a fair-skinned person or a dark-skinned person except that you excel him by Taqwa (piety and fear of Allah).”***⁷²

...There are so many of us who very foolishly and ignorantly pride ourselves over our wealth, family name, beauty – sometimes even our knowledge of Deen or the services we are rendering of Deen; considering these as the criteria for establishing our superiority over others.

Whenever the nafs asserts itself with : ***‘I am better... than him (or her)’***, then we should understand that we are on the same footing as shaytaan.

When Allah Ta’ala commanded the angels to bow down to Hazrat Aadam (عَلَيْهِ السَّلَام), shaytaan refused to do so. When asked as to why, he asserted :

أَنَا خَيْرٌ مِنْهُ ۚ خَلَقْتَنِي مِنْ نَّارٍ وَخَلَقْتَهُ مِنْ طِينٍ ۝

**‘I AM BETTER THAN HE. YOU CREATED ME FROM FIRE,
AND HIM FROM CLAY.’**

[SURAH A’RAAF 7 :12]

This opinion of : ***‘I am better...’*** is reason enough for serious concern, since this attitude is what is termed as pride (*takabbur*), arrogance and conceit (*ujub*), the cancer of the spiritual heart. This is such an ailment which also leads to the evil of boasting.

⁷² Ahmad

Allah Ta'ala states :

إِنَّ اللَّهَ لَا يُحِبُّ مَنْ كَانَ مُخْتَالًا فَخُورًا ۝

**“VERILY ALLAH DOES NOT LIKE THE ONE WHO HAS PRIDE
AND IS BOASTFUL.”**

[SURAH AN-NISAA 4 : 36]

وَلَا تُصَعِّرْ خَدَّكَ لِلنَّاسِ وَلَا تَمْشِ فِي الْأَرْضِ مَرَحًا ۚ إِنَّ اللَّهَ لَا يُحِبُّ كُلَّ مُخْتَالٍ فَخُورٍ ۝

**“AND SWELL NOT YOUR CHEEK (FOR PRIDE) AT MEN, NOR WALK IN
INSOLENCE THROUGH THE EARTH; FOR ALLAH LOVES NOT
ANY ARROGANT BOASTER.”**

[SURAH LUQMAN 31 : 18]

Allah Ta'ala makes evident His abhorrence by humiliating and abasing such a person and reducing the person's esteem in the eyes of people. It has been related from Rasulullah (ﷺ): ***“...he who is proud will be abased by Allah, for though he considers himself great, he is lowly in the eyes of men to such an extent that he is of less value in their estimation than a dog or a pig.”***⁷³

To cure and purify the heart of these diseases one will have to submit to the scalpel of the surgeon of the spiritual heart - a *Muhaqqiq*⁷⁴ Shaykh. *Tazkiyah* (purification) of the heart and *Islaah* (reformation) of the nafs is not achieved by just reading of kitaabs.

⁷³ Abu Dawood

⁷⁴ *Muhaqqiq* : meticulous

Furthermore, no matter by what titles people may address us in this world, we still have to await the Day of Qiyaamah to know our worth by Allah. It will only be on the Day of Qiyaamah that we will find out as to who was *Afdhal* (most virtuous).

Maulana Sayyid Sulayman Nadvi (رَحْمَةُ اللَّهِ عَلَيْهِ) used to say:

***Whether we live like this or live like that,
What is left to be seen is how our stay there will be
(i.e. the Hereafter).***



The Concealment of Women

Throughout the Qur'aan Shareef, besides the name of Hazrat Maryam (عَلَيْهَا السَّلَام) there is no name mentioned of any other woman; and yet there are so many verses relating to women; in fact an entire Surah has been named 'An-Nisaa' (The Women).

When the Beloved wife of Rasulullah (صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ), Hazrat Ayesha (رَضِيَ اللهُ عَنْهَا) was slandered, Allah Ta'ala revealed 10 verses in Surah Noor⁷⁵, proving her innocence. However, her name is not mentioned.

Allah Ta'ala mentions the wife of Hazrat Nuh (عَلَيْهِ السَّلَام) and the wife of Hazrat Lut (عَلَيْهِ السَّلَام) as Disbelievers.

ضَرَبَ اللَّهُ مَثَلًا لِلَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا امْرَأَتَ نُوحٍ وَامْرَأَتَ لُوطٍ ۖ كَانَتَا تَحْتَ عَبْدَيْنِ مِنْ عِبَادِنَا صَالِحِينَ فَخَانَتَهُمَا فَلَمْ يُغْنِيَا عَنْهُمَا مِنَ اللَّهِ شَيْئًا وَقِيلَ ادْخُلَا النَّارَ مَعَ الدَّٰخِلِينَ ۝

“ALLAH SETS FOR AN EXAMPLE TO THE UNBELIEVERS, THE WIFE OF NUH AND THE WIFE OF LUT : THEY WERE (RESPECTIVELY) UNDER TWO OF OUR RIGHTEOUS SERVANTS BUT THEY BETRAYED THEIR HUSBANDS (I.E. IN REGARD TO MATTERS OF TRUTH) AND THEY PROFITED NOTHING BEFORE ALLAH ON THEIR ACCOUNT, BUT WERE TOLD : ‘ENTER THE FIRE ALONG WITH (OTHERS) THAT ENTER!’”

[SURAH TAHRIM 66 : 10]

⁷⁵ Surah Noor : Verses 11 - 20

The mother of Maryam (عليها السلام) is mentioned as 'Imraan's wife'. The vow she took, when she had conceived, has been mentioned in the Qur'aan Shareef as follows:

إِذْ قَالَتِ امْرَأَتُ عِمْرَانَ رَبِّ إِنِّي نَذَرْتُ لَكَ مَا فِي بَطْنِي مُحَرَّرًا فَتَقَبَّلْ مِنِّي ۚ
إِنَّكَ أَنْتَ السَّمِيعُ الْعَلِيمُ ۝

“WHEN ‘IMRAAN’S WIFE SAID : ‘O MY LORD, I HAVE VOWED WHAT IS IN MY STOMACH TO BE EXCLUSIVELY FOR YOU. SO ACCEPT (IT) FROM ME. YOU, CERTAINLY YOU, ARE THE ALL HEARING, THE ALL KNOWING.”

[SURAH AAL-‘IMRAAN 3 : 35]

Hazrat Aasiya (عليها السلام) is mentioned as ‘the wife of Fir’aun’.

وَضَرَبَ اللَّهُ مَثَلًا لِلَّذِينَ آمَنُوا امْرَأَتَ فِرْعَوْنَ ۖ إِذْ قَالَتْ رَبِّ ابْنِ لِي عِنْدَكَ بَيْتًا فِي
الْجَنَّةِ وَنَجِّنِي مِنَ فِرْعَوْنَ وَعَمَلِهِ وَنَجِّنِي مِنَ الْقَوْمِ الظَّالِمِينَ ۝

“AND ALLAH SETS FORTH AS AN EXAMPLE TO THOSE WHO BELIEVE THE WIFE OF FIR’AUN (PHAROAH) : BEHOLD SHE SAID : ‘O MY LORD! BUILD FOR ME, IN NEARNESS TO YOU, A HOUSE IN PARADISE, AND SAVE ME FROM FIR’AUN AND HIS DOINGS AND SAVE ME FROM THOSE WHO DO WRONG.”

[SURAH TAHREEM 66 : 11]

Allah Ta’ala mentions only Hazrat Maryam (عليها السلام) by name.

وَمَرْيَمَ ابْنَتَ عِمْرَانَ الَّتِي أَحْصَانَتْ فَرْجَهَا فَنَفَخْنَا فِيهِ مِنْ رُوحِنَا وَصَدَّقَتْ بِكَلِمَاتِ رَبِّهَا
وَكُنْتُمْ مِنَ الْفَائِزِينَ ۝

**“AND MARYAM, THE DAUGHTER OF ‘IMRAAN, WHO GUARDED HER
CHASTITY...”**

[SURAH TAḤREEM 66 : 12]

Why has Allah Ta’ala specifically mentioned the name of Maryam (عَلَيْهَا السَّلَام)?

Besides proving the purity and chastity of Hazrat Maryam (عَلَيْهَا السَّلَام) against the false accusations of the Jews, as mentioned in Surah An-Nisaa:

وَبِكَفْرِهِمْ وَقَوْلِهِمْ عَلَى مَرْيَمَ بُهْتَانًا عَظِيمًا ۝

**‘... THAT THEY UTTERED AGAINST MARYAM, A GRAVE FALSE CHARGE.’
(I.E. THAT SHE WAS UNCHASTE)**

[SURAH AN-NISAA 4 : 156]

Allah Ta’ala presents her elevated rank in Surah Aal-Imraan :

وَإِذْ قَالَتِ الْمَلَكَةُ يَمْرَيْمُ إِنَّ اللَّهَ اصْطَفَاكِ وَطَهَّرَكِ وَاصْطَفَاكِ عَلَى نِسَاءِ الْعَالَمِينَ ۝

**‘BEHOLD! THE ANGELS SAID : ‘O MARYAM, ALLAH HAS CHOSEN YOU AND
PURIFIED YOU – CHOSEN YOU ABOVE THE WOMEN OF ALL NATIONS.”**

[SURAH AAL-IMRAAN 3 : 42]

Hazrat Ibn Abbas (رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ) narrates that Rasulullah (صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ) once said : *‘The most highly esteemed women of Paradise will be Hazrat Khadeeja, daughter of Khuwailid; and Faatima, daughter of Muhammad (صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ); and Maryam, daughter of Imraan;*

*and Aasiya, daughter of Muzaahim; the wife of Fir'aun.'*⁷⁶

Allah Ta'ala mentions Hazrat Maryam by name in the Qur'aan Shareef, stating very clearly the miraculous birth of Hazrat 'Eesa (عليه السلام). By mentioning 'Eesa (عليه السلام) as the son of Maryam – 'Eesa Ibn Maryam', Allah Ta'ala highlights the fact that Hazrat 'Eesa (عليه السلام) is not the son of any father.

اسْمُهُ الْمَسِيحُ عِيسَى ابْنُ مَرْيَمَ وَجِيهًا فِي الدُّنْيَا وَالْآخِرَةِ وَمِنَ الْمُقَرَّبِينَ ۝

“... HIS NAME WILL BE ‘EESA THE SON OF MARYAM, HELD IN HONOUR IN THIS WORLD AND THE HEREAFTER AND OF THOSE NEAREST TO ALLAH.”

[SURAH AAL-IMRAAN 3 : 45]

This also teaches us a very important lesson : Allah Ta'ala has granted women, respect and honour, and He wants them to guard this. **Therefore, if there is no real need to reveal her name, then it should not fly around in newspapers, magazines, faxes, over Radio stations, on car number plates, etc.**

There is no harm in revealing a woman's name when there is a need to do so. For example, the names of many, many women have been mentioned in the Ahaadeeth of Rasulullah (ﷺ), including that of Rasulullah's (ﷺ) wives and daughters. There was a genuine need for this, since there had to be verification of Ahaadeeth and so forth.

⁷⁶ Ahmad

In our times of fitnah⁷⁷ and high crime, the concealment of a woman's name is for her own protection, from the mischief of pranksters and other evil-minded people. There is no lack of evidence to prove the harassment, so many women have faced, who published their names, addresses, telephone numbers, and photographs in newspapers and magazines.

Beside the above protection that such concealment offers, it is also a protection from the efforts made by nafs, in seeking '*name and fame*' – which has become a common motive behind many, both men and women, announcing and publishing name, qualifications, and so forth. This love for '*name and fame*' is a sickness of the spiritual heart, which renders deeds unacceptable in the Court of Allah Ta'ala. One has to be very much on guard against the snares of nafs and shaytaan.

As has been mentioned, there is no sin if this is required or the intention is not "*name and fame*".



⁷⁷ *Fitnah* : Trial (It also implies corruption, mischief, etc.)

Sihr and Jinn Obsession

There are many, many people – especially women – who have the suspicion that someone has done some witchcraft on them, on their children and husbands, or that they are being troubled by some Jinn.

...There is no doubt that some people may genuinely be afflicted with Sihr or Jinn, who may require some treatment. However, the opinion, assumption and diagnosis that every ailment, difficulty or problem stems from sihr and jinn has become a fixation and an obsession for so many.

The solution that many people then resort to is visiting the many Aamils⁷⁸ who frequent our shores. Whilst there are some very sincere and pious Aamils, the majority are into it as a business and trade.

And it's big business. Bringing in big money. And it has also become an undercover trade – where women are exploited and in some cases, sexually abused.

How many write and phone, wanting some guidance or help, or they want to verify.

...One person said that an Aamil told him that he was possessed by 6 Jinn and to catch and tie them all up, will cost him R6000 a jinn. When he asked my opinion, I told him in humour: *'Six jinns*

⁷⁸ *Aamils* : Those who treat people afflicted by witchcraft/ influence of jinn

in you would have had you dancing. But you are very calm and relaxed. Tell the Aamil that he must first catch and tie them up, thereafter show them all to you, before payment.' – I then told him that it is nothing but a con.

It is one big fiasco, with thousands being swindled from naïve and gullible Muslims.

One brother e-mailed, saying that he moved into a new home, and an Aamil told him that his new house needs to be 'cleaned' – and it will cost R1000. He wanted to know what he should do

One husband related that his wife visited some Aamil. She was put into some trance and was told to remove her clothes ... and such, such happenings that leave you totally stunned.

How can husbands allow their women to just visit anyone – and be alone with a man – whom they barely know?

Trust is a lost entity.

And to think that despite all the warnings, people still go back – and they hop from one Aamil to another, to another – and what could have just been a small problem – becomes a traumatising experience. We make mountains out of molehills and then our lives are consumed with visits to Aamils, treatments, taweez⁷⁹ and other amaliyat (incantations). ...Sometimes the problem is not even solved.

⁷⁹ Taweez : amulet

This is what happens when we cannot appreciate the simple solutions and prescriptions of Shariah. **We are told that if we suspect anything like sihr (witchcraft) or jinn, then Ayatul Kursi⁸⁰ and the 3 Quls suffice from all harm and mischief.**

But it seems we have more trust and confidence in Aamils than in Allah Ta'ala! (نَعُوْذُ بِاللّٰهِ)⁸¹

Moreover, most of the time, there are many lies spoken and the person is led to even believe that his mother or sister or someone close is doing some kind of witchcraft. There is mistrust and suspicion which is unwarranted and sinful. And this leads to enmity and even severance of family ties.⁸²

These weaknesses demand attention and correction because they result in many grave sins.

Allah Ta'ala has explicitly instructed:

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا اجْتَنِبُوا كَثِيرًا مِّنَ الظَّنِّ إِنَّ بَعْضَ الظَّنِّ إِثْمٌ

**“O YOU WHO BELIEVE! AVOID MUCH SUSPICION;
FOR SOME SUSPICION IS A SIN.”**

[SURAH HUJURAT 49.12]

Rasulullah (ﷺ) said, **"Avoid suspicion, indeed expressing suspicions is the worst lie."**⁸³

⁸⁰ *Ayatul Kursi* : An ayat of protection. Surah 2 : 225

⁸¹ (نَعُوْذُ بِاللّٰهِ) *Na-oozu Billah*: We seek Allah's protection.

⁸² Listen to the talk : **"Clearing the misunderstandings about Sihr and Black magic, Taweez and Istikhara"**. Download and listen from website: <http://YunusPatel.co.za>

⁸³ Sahih Bukhari

Prescription for Sihr / Jinn

The following is a prescription which Hazrat Maulana Yunus Patel (Rahmatullahi 'alayh) would give to those who complained of Sihr and Jinn. Hazrat Maulana (RA) would say that this prescription will, Insha-Allah, suffice as a protection from any evil elements that may be present.

Every morning and evening read the following :

3 x Durood Shareef

3 x Ayatul Kursi

3 x 3 Surah Al-Ikhlaas, Surah Al-Falaq and Surah An-Naas

11 x La Haula wala Quwata Illah Billah

3 x Durood Shareef.

Blow over your body. Blow on water and drink.



The 1 Cent Coin

Once, when taking a walk through a park, with some friends, we came across a fountain, wherein were numerous 1 cent and 2 cent coins. On noticing this, it came to mind, that since the 1 cent coin and the 2 cent coin have negligible value – in fact, no worth or value is really given to these coins – they are generally discarded in a fountain, after some ‘wish’ is made.

...And if the wish is such, that it would definitely be accomplished with money, then a mere 1 cent or 2 cents would not suffice for the fulfilment of the grand wishes of those who throw with any such hope...

Nevertheless, I presented this analogy to my companions:

The value of the 1 cent coin, after having separated itself from the R5 coin, or the R100 note, **diminished. It ‘depreciated’, so to speak.**

...So many pass by such fountains, and yet no one considers taking one or a few of those coins.

However, when that 1 cent coin attaches itself to the R100 note, then its value and worth is considered just as that R100 note. When the 1 cent coin attaches itself to the R100 note, its value will increase – It is now part of R100.

And if that 1 cent coin prefers its '*independence*' then inevitably, that would be to its own loss. It will then be considered worthless and insignificant, and will be discarded in some fountain or thrown on the street.

In a like manner, when Saalikeen⁸⁴ attach themselves to the Ahlullah⁸⁵, by keeping their pious company and emulating them in their actions, speech and character, their value increases. When we keep the company of friends of Allah Ta'ala, then Insha-Allah, we will, through the blessings of their value, also acquire some worth.

If there is sincerity, the Saalik will also become as valuable and precious.

My Shaykh, Hazrat Maulana Hakeem Muhammad Akhtar Saheb (Daaamat Barakaatuhum) had given a wonderful analogy when he visited South Africa, and observed the sand of the gold mines in Gauteng.

He explained that the sand which remained in the company of gold, became 'golden' in colour. Something as **ordinary** as sand took on the hue and shade of something as **precious** as gold. So too, one will notice that the sand which contains coal, becomes black in colour.

Hazrat then compared the 'golden sand' to the person who sincerely befriends and associates with the Ahlullah. **Such a**

⁸⁴ *Saalikeen* : Seekers of Allah Ta'ala

⁸⁵ *Ahlullah* : People of Allah

person will not only acquire the same colouring as ‘gold’; he will become gold.

...Those who think they can tread the path to Allah Ta’ala (Sulook) on their own and also become so ‘valuable’, are quite mistaken.

Even our honourable and respected Maulana Jalaluddeen Rumi (رَحْمَةُ اللهِ عَلَيْهِ) had said : *“People addressed me as, ‘Molvi’⁸⁶, until I attached myself to the blessed company of Shamsuddeen Tabrezi. Then people began addressing me as ‘Maula-e-Rum’ (The Master of Rum).”*

Then again, the Sahaba-e-Kiraam (رَضِيَ اللهُ عَنْهُمْ) became ‘*Sahabah*’⁸⁷ because they attached themselves to the blessed, august and exclusive company of Rasulullah (صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ).

...This ‘Suhbat’ (companionship) of the Ahlullah is the medium of spiritual achievement.

However, great caution should be exercised in choosing a mentor. This warning cannot be emphasized enough.

Just the garb of piety or flowery speech does not make a person a *Wali* (friend) of Allah Ta’ala. Some ‘*peers*’ have ulterior and worldly motives; especially of milking their mureedeen (disciples) of their money. They just give their mureedeen, wazaa`if and some tasbeehs to read. There is no education, no disciplining,

⁸⁶ ‘*Molvi*’ : meaning, one who has knowledge.

⁸⁷ *Sahabah* : Companions (of the Holy Prophet (Sallallaahu ‘alayhi waSallam))

and no reform.

...If there is no Deen in the Shaykh, how will his mureeds change their lives? ...When the Shaykh is a prisoner of nafs (ego) and shaytaan, how will it be possible for him to free his mureeds from nafs and shaytaan ?

Therefore Maulana Jalaluddeen Rumi (رَحْمَةُ اللَّهِ عَلَيْهِ) had said:

***“Develop contact with a righteous one
So that through his company and du`aa you may succeed,
But search for a guide who is awake in all situations
So that you too may become awake.
And if you should remain in the company of the vanquished,
You too will become vanquished.”***

There are many who make the claim of being Mashaa`ik but are themselves caught up in the snares of nafs and shaytaan. They have not even recognized their own nafs, have no experience in the field of Islaah and Tazkiyah, and instead of guiding, they misguide. They then become a trial for the people.

The true Mashaa`ik do not promote and advertise themselves, nor do they canvass for Mureedeen. They do not chase after name and fame. They do not hanker after Dunya. They wish to remain concealed, but Allah Ta’ala sometimes chooses for them to be known.

Thus, when choosing a Shaykh, consider the Shaykh who is learned, practical on his knowledge, pious, trained and experienced in the field of Islaah and Tazkiya, and

acknowledged by the Ulama-e-Haq as one who is truly Sahib-e-Nisbat and Waliullah. It is through attaching oneself to such a Shaykh, that the Saalik will acquire value.

Hazrat Dr. Abdul Hay Saheb (رَحْمَةُ اللَّهِ عَلَيْهِ), who was a senior Khalifa of Hazrat Maulana Ashraf Ali Thanwi (رَحْمَةُ اللَّهِ عَلَيْهِ), was wont to say :

***“There is only one way to meet Him (Allah),
Seek the road from those who
have already found Him.”***



Clothing for Salaah

Make Salaah wearing such clothes, that if a person were to visit you, you would not feel ashamed to talk and entertain your guest, wearing those clothes.⁸⁸

Many have the habit of performing Fajr Salaah in their pyjamas – but will not entertain family and friends dressed in the same manner. They will not enter the court of any judge or king dressed in such clothing. How then can a person enter the Court of the King of Kings, Allah Ta’ala, dressed in pyjamas or undignified clothing?

Allah Ta’ala in fact guides us to the same :

يَبْنَى اَدَمَ خَدُوْا زِيْنَتَكُمْ عِنْدَ كُلِّ مَسْجِدٍ

**“O CHILDREN OF AADAM, WEAR YOUR BEAUTIFUL APPAREL AT EVERY TIME
AND PLACE OF PRAYER...”**

[SURAH AL-A`RAAF 7 : 31]

Whilst the demand is to cover appropriately, encouragement is given to present oneself by wearing neat, clean, beautiful clothing within one’s means.

⁸⁸ It is *Makrooh* (disliked) to offer the Salaah in an undignified dress, as well as wearing garments that have animate pictures. Even though the Salaah will be valid, it will be defective.

Many men perform Salaah in shirt and pants. If the pants is tight, this kind of dressing is showing disrespect to Salaah and is *Makrooh* (extremely disliked). A person wearing such clothing should rather replace the shirt with a kurta or wear a jubba over the shirt. This, at least, would indicate to some respect and modesty. Ideally the person should be wearing the Sunnah libaas (dressing) of the kurta. This dressing has noor.

Women too should take care to cover themselves appropriately – more especially for Salaah. Many women read Salaah with semi-transparent clothing or scarves, which invalidate the Salaah.

There is a need for all to learn the masaa'il (rules) pertaining to Salaah, Taharah (cleanliness) and other Ibaadah. Otherwise, the person is carrying out his duties but they are not valid, due to his or her ignorance.



The Best of Both Worlds

In verse 200 / 201 of Surah Al-Baqarah, Allah Ta’ala states :

فَمِنَ النَّاسِ مَن يَقُولُ رَبَّنَا آتِنَا فِي الدُّنْيَا وَمَا لَهُ فِي الْآخِرَةِ مِنْ خَلَقٍ ۝

“... FROM AMONGST PEOPLE ARE THOSE WHO SAY : “O OUR RABB, GRANT US (YOUR BOUNTIES) IN THIS WORLD.” BUT THEY WILL HAVE NO PORTION IN THE HEREAFTER.

وَمِنْهُمْ مَّن يَقُولُ رَبَّنَا آتِنَا فِي الدُّنْيَا حَسَنَةً وَفِي الْآخِرَةِ حَسَنَةً
وَقِنَا عَذَابَ النَّارِ ۝

AND FROM THEM ARE ALSO THOSE WHO SAY : “O OUR RABB, GRANT US GOOD IN THIS WORLD, AND GOOD IN THE HEREAFTER AND SAVE US FROM THE PUNISHMENT OF THE FIRE.”

In the pre-Islamic days, known as the days of Ignorance or Jahiliyyah, people would also perform the Hajj⁸⁹. They too would proceed to Mina, Arafaat and Muzdalifa⁹⁰. However, there were many customary actions which were rife, which Allah Ta’ala makes mention of, guiding the Muslims to abandon such ignorant and vain pursuits, more especially during the sacred days of Hajj.

Allah Ta’ala continues the same discussion, by mentioning that some of those Arabs from the period of Jahiliyyah, would, during the days of Hajj, only make dua for worldly needs and wants. They

⁸⁹ Hajj : Pilgrimage to Makkah Mukarramah. This is the 5th pillar of Islam.

⁹⁰ Mina, Arafaat, Muzdalifa : Specific places visited during the Pilgrimage

would ask for wealth, property, honour - anything and everything worldly, which they were desirous of. Their duas thus comprised of **only** requests for material acquisition or worldly success, and such supplications were and are insignificant in comparison to the greater needs of man in respect to the life to come.

Moreover, they asked without care and concern, wanting just satisfaction of their worldly desires – whether it be good and beneficial, or bad and harmful. Their supplication did not include the word '*hasanah*', which would be the means of goodness in what they ask.

With regards to these people, Allah Ta'ala says : *But they will have no portion in the Hereafter*, because they only asked for this world. Moreover, they will only get that which was apportioned for them in this world; they will receive only what Allah Ta'ala decreed for them – nothing more, nothing less.

This verse is also a warning to the Muslims who pray for only worldly achievements, whose main objective is success in this worldly life, with no concern for their spiritual needs.

Immediately thereafter, Allah Ta'ala makes mention of another kind of people and the dua that they make :

رَبَّنَا آتِنَا فِي الدُّنْيَا حَسَنَةً وَفِي الْآخِرَةِ حَسَنَةً وَقِنَا عَذَابَ النَّارِ ۝

**“O OUR SUSTAINER, GIVE US IN THIS WORLD HASANAH, AND IN THE
HEREAFTER, HASANAH, AND SAVE US FROM THE PUNISHMENT OF THE FIRE.”**

This second group of people would ask for the things of this world, but they asked for it with “*hasanah*”.

This dua is a Masnoon dua which Nabi (ﷺ) recited in abundance. We are also taught to recite this dua between the Ruknul Yamaani⁹¹ and Hajre Aswad⁹² during Tawaaf⁹³. However, it can be recited after Salaah and on any other occasion.

The question arises as to why must this dua be recited in abundance?

The reason is, that despite this dua being concise in words, it is most comprehensive and all-encompassing. **It includes every bounty and blessing, of both worlds.** The person is not just asking for wealth, honour, etc. per say; rather he is seeking “*hasanah*” (goodness) with these bounties.

The Mufasssireen (Commentators) explain that “*فِي الدُّنْيَا حَسَنَةٌ*” encompasses every need of a person in this world.

It is unfortunate that we do not understand nor value the dua. **Our condition is such, that when we request someone for dua, and he says : “May Allah Ta’ala grant you the best of both worlds,” we feel dissatisfied.** We desire a lengthy dua wherein various bounties and blessings should be mentioned – yet this dua includes every blessing, every bounty and every kind of good and favourable condition.

⁹¹ *Ruknul Yamaani* : One of the blessed corners of the Ka`bah Shareef

⁹² *Hajre-Aswad* : The Black Stone

⁹³ *Tawaaf* : Circumambulation of the Ka`bah Shareef

We also learn from this dua that Allah Ta’ala does not prevent us from seeking the material things of this world. We are living in a world of means and there are many requirements for our existence. Allah Ta’ala encourages and approves dua wherein a person is seeking his worldly needs. It is as if Allah Ta’ala is telling us, “Make this dua, in which you seek the good of this world also.”

Now what is meant by “فِي الدُّنْيَا حَسَنَةً” ?

Allaamah Sayyid Mahmood Aaloosi (Rahmatullahi ‘alayh) had explained in his Tafseer, *‘Ruhul Ma`aani’*, the best of this world as:

- 1.) ‘Al Aafiyatu wal Kafa’ : Well-being and Protection from all forms of trials (fitan) and Sufficiency in Rizq (Sustenance).
- 2.) ‘Az Zawj us Sawlih’ - A pious, righteous, compatible marriage partner.
- 3.) ‘Al-Aulaadul Abraar’ - Pious children
- 4.) 'Al Maal-us-Sawlih' - Wealth which is obtained through Halaal sources, full of Barakah (blessings) and free of contamination and impurity.
- 5.) ‘Thana-ul-Khalq’ – The praise and good opinion of people.
- 6.) ‘Al-Ilm wal Ibaadah’ - Beneficial knowledge and practice upon it.
- 7.) ‘Fahm’ - Understanding of Deen.
- 8.) ‘Suhbat-us-Sawliheen’ – The company of the pious.
- 9.) ‘An nusratu alal ‘adaa’ – Help against all enemies, including the greatest ones – nafs and shaytaan.

Also included is the seeking of the ability to perform righteous deeds. Every action that is done according to the Qur`aan Shareef and Sunnah will fall under righteous deeds. Whether it is Salaah, Zakaah, Fasting, caring for the poor, the needy and the destitute, fulfillment of the rights of one's spouse, fulfillment of the rights of the children, neighbours, the poor and everybody. All this falls under righteous deeds and it is these actions that will become the protection from the punishment of the fire, as has been brought out in the dua: "... **and save us from the punishment of the fire.**"

'Hasanah fil Aakhirah' includes every need of ours in the Hereafter, whether it be protection from the punishment of the grave, easy reckoning on the Day of Qiyaamah, entry into Jannah and enjoyment of all those bounties which no eye has seen, no ear has heard of and the thought also, has not crossed anyone's mind, including the greatest bounty of seeing the Countenance of Allah Ta'ala.

So it is a very beautiful, comprehensive dua which has been given to us by Allah Ta'ala and we should include it in our duas after Salaah and on other occasions. However, it must be made with deep hearted meditation, sincerity and conviction.

**Extracted and condensed from the 1431 Ramadaan Fajr talks of
Hazrat Maulana Yunus Patel (RA).**

**For a detailed explanation, download from the website:
YunusPatel.co.za**



Saving Spiritual Lives

We often hear helicopters circling the area; generally searching for some hijacked vehicle. This is a common observation and experience in the area.

If it is night, then the helicopter uses a powerful light as a search light.

Listening to and observing this, the following analogy came to mind :

The Auliya Allah⁹⁴, the Mashaa`ik, are like those helicopters, except that they are searching for those persons who have been hijacked by nafs and shaytaan - people like us.

The Auliya Allah also possess a very powerful light in their hearts: It is noor that has developed in their hearts through obedience to Allah Ta'ala and Rasulullah (ﷺ) as well as total abstinence from sins. With this powerful noor, they are able to search out and save thousands, if not millions.

We know that if the hijacked vehicle is found and returned to the owner, then the owner is naturally very happy, more especially if his car is a very expensive one. Similarly, if due to the search efforts made, not only by the Auliya Allah, but by all Muslims, others return to Allah Ta'ala's obedience, or return to Imaan and

⁹⁴ *Auliya Allah* : Friends of Allah Ta'ala

Islam, Allah Ta'ala's happiness is much, much greater than that of the car owner.

The owner of the car may either thank the person who found his car or if he is of a noble disposition, he will express his gratitude with some gift. Allah Ta'ala is by far more generous and appreciative and His rewards are granted in various forms, in this world as well as the Hereafter, for those who make the effort of searching and saving hijacked persons – those “hijacked” by nafs and shaytaan.

Then again, looking at the life of the Muslim, we find that it is a **“Rescue Mission”**: He or she is always prepared to make sacrifices to save the spiritual lives of others.

How often we read of the rescue missions that go out to sea, to rescue someone or the other carried away by strong current, or those struggling to survive due to the ship sinking, or those who need to be evacuated from ships. **We find that the pilot is well-trained for the operation and those persons, those rescue swimmers, who form part of the rescue team, are physically strong, fit, able and very experienced in their field. They have to be highly skilled to ensure that the operation is a successful one. If not, they too will become victim to the waters of the oceans.**

Similarly, as Muslims who are rescue swimmers and ‘spiritual’ life savers in the field of Da`wah⁹⁵ and Tabligh⁹⁶, we have got to

⁹⁵ *Da`wah* : Invitation (to Islam)

be spiritually strong, fit and able and gain in experience ... otherwise the current of fitnahs may sweep us away also.

If we are spiritually weak, then we too can end up drowning in some sin or the other. And this is very much a reality : Many who have surface knowledge and they have not made much of an effort against their nafs, become victim to the storms of some sin or the other.

Similarly, the Muslim is a **Paramedic**. Every Muslim should be qualified in the basics on how to save the spiritual lives of those who meet up with tragic accidents (that is, they fall into sins). If we are in the know-how, then we will be able to apply ourselves immediately in aiding and saving such people from spiritual death.

...How often, it is the CPR (cardiopulmonary resuscitation) or artificial respiration given before being taken to hospital, which saves the person. Even though the person's situation will still be critical, he has been revived with CPR and the chances are thus strong, of his survival if he is taken to a hospital immediately. **Similarly, we need to learn spiritual CPR for emergency cases – that is, to make sincere dua for hidayat; but the building of our spiritual stamina, the training and the expertise comes in keeping company with those qualified and masters in the field – our Mashaa`ik and Ulama-e-Haq⁹⁷.**

⁹⁶ *Tabligh* : Propagation

⁹⁷ *Ulama-e-Haq*: Scholars of Truth

Another analogy is that of the Tracking and Security companies and search parties that are formed to track kidnapped children or hijacked persons. **The Muslim is a tracking company: He searches, invites and calls the disbelievers to Imaan and Islam, and the weak Muslims, to stronger Imaan.**

Unfortunately, the state of affairs today is that many a time the guards hired from security companies turn out to be the thieves, hijackers and criminals themselves. Here in South Africa, we have security guards and police officers being caught, arrested and apprehended.

Sadly, many Muslims have also become hijackers, taking their Muslim brothers and sisters to Haraam – casinos, clubs, pornography, music and so forth. Or some give the injection of spiritual death, with drugs and other such Haraam, or kufr ideologies.

...Instead of saving from the fire of Jahannum, many invite others to join them, to accompany them, in disobedience and even rejection of Allah Ta'ala and His Ahkaam (Laws). Allah Ta'ala have mercy upon us – because this is truly a reality. **The Majority invite to the Fire, but the Auliya Allah invite to Paradise. The majority “go with the flow”. The Auliya Allah move against the current of fitnah.**

Despite the difficulties and challenges, the help of Allah Ta'ala is with those who are Friends. Take heed :

وَإِنْ تَطِيعْ أَكْثَرُ مَنْ فِي الْأَرْضِ يُضِلُّوكَ عَنْ سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ ط إِنَّ يَتَّبِعُونَ إِلَّا الظَّنَّ وَإِنْ هُمْ إِلَّا يَخْرُصُونَ ۝

“IF YOU OBEY THE MAJORITY OF THE PEOPLE ON EARTH THEY WILL TAKE YOU ASTRAY FROM ALLAH’S PATH. THEY FOLLOW NOTHING BUT CONJECTURE AND DO NOTHING BUT LIE”.

[SURAH AN’AAM 6 : 116]

إِنَّمَا وَلِيُّكُمُ اللَّهُ وَرَسُولُهُ وَالَّذِينَ آمَنُوا الَّذِينَ يُقِيمُونَ الصَّلَاةَ وَيُؤْتُونَ الزَّكَاةَ وَهُمْ رُكَّعُونَ ۝

“YOUR (REAL) FRIENDS ARE (NO LESS THAN) ALLAH, HIS APOSTLE, AND THE (FELLOWSHIP OF) BELIEVERS, - THOSE WHO ESTABLISH REGULAR PRAYERS, AND REGULAR CHARITY, AND THEY BOW DOWN HUMBLY (IN WORSHIP).”

[SURAH MAA’IDAH 5 : 58]

إِنَّمَا الْمُؤْمِنُونَ الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا بِاللَّهِ وَرَسُولِهِ ثُمَّ لَمْ يَرْتَابُوا وَجَاهَدُوا بِأَمْوَالِهِمْ وَأَنْفُسِهِمْ فِي سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ ۖ أُولَٰئِكَ هُمُ الصَّادِقُونَ ۝

"THE (TRUE) BELIEVERS ARE THOSE ONLY WHO BELIEVE IN ALLAH AND HIS MESSENGER AND AFTERWARD DOUBT NOT, BUT STRIVE WITH THEIR WEALTH AND THEIR LIVES FOR THE CAUSE OF ALLAH. SUCH ARE THE SINCERE."

[SURAH HJARAT 49 : 15]



The Green Leaf and the Juicy Grape

Hazrat Maulana Jalaluddeen Rumi⁸ (رَحْمَةُ اللهِ عَلَيْهِ) had mentioned a story in his *Mathnavi Shareef*, of a worm, which was told: “*You will find a delicious, juicy grape on the grapevine.*”

Having heard this, the worm began its journey up the grapevine. It soon came across a green leaf, and thinking it to be the delicious grape, it whiled away its entire life eating off that leaf, until it made its ‘*qabr*’ (grave) on that same green leaf.

Had the worm gone just a little further, it would have come across the delectable grape, and would have enjoyed the sweetness of that grape. It would not have spent all its life on a green leaf.

The anecdote illustrates our similarity with that worm....

Like that worm which landed on the green leaf, many have landed in front of some filthy television programmes, many have landed in Interest transactions, enriching themselves with Haraam; or have landed in fraud and theft, others in some illicit relationship, or in a casino, or in raves, or drugs, or homosexuality, or indecent and obscene novels and magazines, or some porn website on the Internet, or Haraam video games

⁸ Maulana Jalaluddeen Rumi (Rahmatullah ‘alaih) was a great ‘Aalim, Shaykh and Sufi who compiled a masterpiece on Tasawwuf, entitled ‘*The Mathnavi*’.

and a multitude of other sins and illusions - and they ignorantly think that that is the sweet grape. ...These were the leaves before the juicy grape or the thorns before the petals of the fragrant rose flower.

Many set out for the juicy grape of Imaan but have been waylaid and trapped by shaytaan⁹ and nafs¹⁰ in Haraam¹¹ pleasures, in which they while away and waste the very precious time of life. Yet, there are just two steps to be taken to taste of this delicious grape. The first step is on the nafs and the second step, on shaytaan. With these two steps we will enjoy such sweetness of Imaan that we would never want to return to the temporary and sinful pleasures of this world.

Hazrat Maulana Ashraf Ali Thanwi (رَحْمَةُ اللهِ عَلَيْهِ) had said that in reality, **there is just one step**, and that step is suppression of the evil desires of the nafs, since shaytaan became shaytaan because of his nafs.

...It will not be denied that there is some temporary enjoyment in consenting to the evil demands of the nafs. However, this Haraam 'pleasure', which is so short-lived, should be weighed against the anguish and punishment that awaits one in the Hereafter for having earned the displeasure and wrath of Allah Ta'ala.

This punishment is not reserved for only the Hereafter. It descends and pursues a person even in this world, in the form

⁹ *shaytaan* : satan / the devil

¹⁰ *nafs* : ego

¹¹ *Haraam* : unlawful / forbidden according to Shariah

of restlessness, anxiety, fear, humiliation, disgrace, and sometimes, everlasting regret.

My Shaykh, Hazrat Maulana Hakeem Muhammad Akhtar Saheb (Daamat Barakaatuhum) says in poetry:

***“Agreed, there is a little stolen pleasure in sin,
But what great rebellion is this against the Sustainer
(Allah Ta’ala),
(That you use His bounties to disobey Him).
A little while of pleasure and everlasting regret;
What stupidity it is to bury
the Janaza of respect and honour.”***

Even though some difficulty is incurred in opposing the dictates of the evil nafs, the consequence in the Hereafter is eternal pleasure. In this world as well, the person will enjoy tranquility and satisfaction.

And when there are so many forms of Halaal (lawful) pleasures that one could enjoy, why foolishly go toward Haraam?

Commodities of the Heart

When traveling from one place to another, one does not take all of one's belongings. A person takes the required amount of clothes, currency, etc., according to the number of days away from home.

There is, however, one commodity that a person does carry with him throughout the duration of his life, wherever he may go; be it the marketplace, business or on travel. Inevitably, he will also carry this to his grave. **This commodity is that which he has built up in his heart.**

If a person has Imaan, Islam, Ma'rifat (Recognition) and Muhabbat (Love) of Allah Ta'ala and Rasulullah (ﷺ), generosity, honesty, Sabr (patience), Shukr (gratitude), Zuhd (ascetism), Taqwa (piety), and so forth, then these beautiful and virtuous attributes accompany him wherever he goes. He will take with him whatever he has built up within himself.

Although outwardly this person will take only a kafan (shroud) with him when he leaves this material and insignificant world, he will also take such a treasure trove of beautiful qualities and righteous deeds, which will be of tremendous assistance to him in his grave, as well as in the Aakhirah (Hereafter).

On the other hand, if the person has built up within himself, malice, anger, greed, pride, arrogance, conceit, jealousy, evil

desires and passions, and other evil qualities, then this 'baggage' accompanies him wherever he goes. **Such base and evil qualities also become a means of harm, hurt and pain to those with whom he lives, trades, works with, travels, marries or befriends.**

Furthermore, bad character becomes a cause for **isolation** – isolation from Allah Ta'ala's Pleasure, as well as from people. The person's bad behaviour and character automatically distances him from Allah Ta'ala, and people do not want to be near the person. People are apprehensive and uncomfortable with such a person, and prefer to keep their distance. They are happy and they feel safe when they do not have any contact or dealings with him (or her).

This is the condition of bad "baggage" whilst in this world.

There are severe warnings in the Qur'aan Shareef and Ahaadeeth regarding those who create mischief and deliberately cause hurt, harm or injury to others.

Worse, is the person carrying this 'luggage' with him to his grave: he will find this to be a great misfortune and curse. (Allah Ta'ala protect us all)

In this world, we go through 'Customs' and our luggage is sometimes searched. The 'custom officers' in the grave, who will search our 'baggage' of deeds, are the angels, Munkar and Nakeer.

If the person is weighed down with bad deeds and qualities, he will not find a favourable condition in the next life, even though he may have had plenty of money in this worldly life and lived a life of ease and comfort.

Before this impending and long journey, let us acquire the best provisions, by reforming our actions and behaviour, and fulfilling the rights of Allah Ta'ala and creation, sincerely.

وَتَزَوَّدُوا فَإِنَّ خَيْرَ الزَّادِ التَّقْوَىٰ ۖ وَاتَّقُونِ يَا أُولِيَ الْأَلْبَابِ ۚ

“... AND TAKE A PROVISION (WITH YOU) FOR THE JOURNEY, BUT THE BEST OF PROVISIONS IS TAQWA. SO FEAR ME, O YOU THAT ARE WISE.”¹²

[SURAH AL-BAQARAH 2 : 197]

¹² This Ayah (verse) is in reference to the journey of Hajj.

3

Heart Surgery : An Analogy

Being a heart patient and having gone through a quadruple bypass, I have taken many lessons from the experience of ill health and cardiac surgery.

One lesson is analogous to the present condition of the Ummah¹³.

In the initial stage, the heart's condition begins to weaken and one suffers from *Angina*, where there is a lack of oxygen to the heart and there is a feeling of heaviness and crushing pain in the chest, accompanied by shortness of breath, fatigue, etc.

On consultation, one's doctor prescribes medication, a healthy diet, regular exercise and avoiding stress.

If one takes the required care, then a little medication clears the problem. If one is negligent in respect to the prescription, the condition of the heart will deteriorate and this leads to heart damage.

If the heart is severely injured, a heart attack occurs, where there is a blockage in one or more of the arteries – which does not allow blood to flow to an area of the heart. The person needs to be hospitalized and requires a period of rest, together with medication, diet and so forth. Sometimes an Angioplasty is necessary to clear the blocked arteries or widen the narrowed

¹³ *Ummah* : Community of Muslims

arteries, enabling the flow of blood, which contains oxygen and food for the tissues.

If this prescription is also not followed through, the cardiac condition will worsen and reach a stage where neither medication nor an Angioplasty will help. The solution is either a bypass or in the extreme circumstance, a heart transplant.

I had reached the stage where four arteries were blocked and an artery bypass was regarded as the only option. Al_hamdulillah, the operation was very successful. However, the analogy that came to my mind was that this damage of the physical heart and blockage of the arteries is exactly the situation with the Ummah...

In the final analysis, we have severely injured the spiritual heart with sins, and we have blocked the arteries of Aqaa'id (beliefs), Ibaadaat (worship), Mu`aamalaat (Business transactions and dealings), Mu`aasharaat (Social dealings) and Akhl_aaq (character)¹⁴ – with our ignorance, our indifference, our negligence, and by moving away from the Qur`aan and Sunnah, and adopting un-Islamic culture, dress, and practices. ...Our business dealings, our relationships with wives, parents, children, neighbours, Muslims and non-Muslims, do not in any way reflect the beauty and purity of Islam and the Sunnah.

¹⁴ This analogy is in respect to the 5 branches of Shariah :

Aqaa'id : Beliefs

Ibaadaat : Worship

Mu'aamalaat : Business transactions and dealings.

Mu'aasharaat : Social dealings

Akhl_aaq : Character

The 'ECG' (electrocardiogram) for the spiritual hearts has disclosed the spiritual heart failure of so many, due to their statements reflecting weak faith, or faith on the threshold of kufr¹⁵, or outright rejection of the teachings of the Qur'aan and Sunnah¹⁶.

Since we did not heed the warnings of the 'Ulama¹⁷, Mashaa'ik¹⁸ and the righteous Scholars of Islam, in the initial stages, the spiritual heart is now so damaged, that speeches upon speeches, quotations upon quotations from the Qur'aan Shareef and Sunnah, do not cause any change, except in a few.

The only solution is the transplant of the spiritual heart.

What is this transplant of the spiritual heart? ...It is sincere **Taubah (repentance) and Rujoo ilallah ('return' to Allah Ta'ala).**

Why should we wait for punishment to hit us in the form of earthquakes, tornadoes, bombs and other disasters? Let us employ the protection given to us against punishment: **Sincere repentance and mending our relationship with Allah Ta'ala and His Rasul (ﷺ), with obedience.**

When we are going to make use of the prescriptions of sincere Taubah, Du'aa and Zikrullah¹⁹, which is the food and oxygenated 'blood' for the spiritual heart, we will gain in spiritual health

¹⁵ *Kufr* : Rejection

¹⁶ *Sunnah* : The practice of the Rasulullah (ﷺ) and his noble companions (RA).

¹⁷ *'Ulama* : Scholars (of Islam)

¹⁸ *Mashaa'ik* : Spiritual mentors and guides

¹⁹ *Zikrullah* : The Remembrance of Allah Ta'ala.

and strength, and we will not suffer spiritual imbalance. The spiritual arteries will become unblocked without the pain and discomfort of a bypass or transplant.

However, just as a heart patient has to submit himself to a surgeon, so is there a requirement that we submit ourselves to a specialist of the spiritual heart – a Shaykh who is experienced, learned, practicing and pious; whom Allah Ta'ala uses as the medium in the bypass or transplant of the spiritual heart.

After an operation on the physical heart, there are follow-up assessments, visits to the doctor, and an ECG is done, at least once a year. Similarly, there has to be regular visits and correspondence with one's spiritual mentor for assessment of one's spiritual condition.

We should understand that an attack of the physical heart, at the most, only leads to death, whereas that of the spiritual heart leads to death of Imaan and severe loss in the Hereafter.

May Allah Ta'ala grant us the understanding, the concern for our spiritual health and well-being, and the Taufeeq of connecting ourselves to the teachings of Qur'aan and Sunnah, through Amal.

The Shops of Ma`rifat

A person generally purchases material commodities from a shop. Groceries are purchased from a supermarket; clothing from a clothing store, jewellery from a jewellery shop and so forth.

In order to obtain these material commodities, the buyer will have to give a certain amount of money in return for his goods. This is a transaction which is most common in the business world.

There is also a transaction in the spiritual world where special commodities may be purchased, which are generously available for all: **The commodities of Ma`rifat²⁰, Ishq²¹, Qurb²² and Nisbat²³.**

These special commodities of the 'Ma`rifat' and Ishq of Allah Ta`ala are such that they cannot be purchased with the coins and notes, or the gold and silver of this world. ...However, they are to be purchased **in** this world and are found in what I term, the '**shops of Ma`rifat**' – which are found throughout the world.

These 'shops of 'Ma`rifat' are the Ahlullah (People of Allah). They stock the merchandise of Allah Ta`ala. However, these Ahlullah do not accept cash, cheque, card, gold or silver in their

²⁰ *Ma`rifat* : Recognition (of Allah Ta`ala)

²¹ *Ishq* : Love (for Allah Ta`ala)

²² *Qurb* : Nearness (to Allah Ta`ala)

²³ *Nisbat* : Connection (with Allah Ta`ala)

transactions. They accept a different kind of currency, which is far more precious than money.

The payment for the merchandise of Allah Ta'ala is the qurbaani (sacrifice) of our evil desires. To become '*Aarif Billah*'²⁴, we have got to make payment for these spiritual treasures with the sacrifice of our base desires.

The 'asking price' is the sacrifices of our evil desires – whether it is the evil desire to cast lustful gazes, commit fornication or adultery, gamble, take drugs, backbite, listen to music or commit any action which is Haraam²⁵.

Added to this, the more money a person possesses, the greater the commodity that can be purchased. ...Five Rand cannot buy a person a 22ct gold bangle. **You require 'big' money for big commodities.**

Similarly, the more the qurbaani, the more the Ma'rifat of Allah Ta'ala; **the greater the sacrifice, the greater the recognition of Allah Ta'ala.**

Take the example of a person who goes to the Jeweller and he has with him R100 000. On the one hand, he wants to purchase jewellery and on the other hand, he does not want to part with his money. He is attached to the one and he is drawn to the other. He wants both. ...But he will have to part with that money in exchange for the jewels that he desires.

²⁴ *Aarif Billah* : One who has recognition of Allah Ta'ala

²⁵ *Haraam* : forbidden

Many of us want to please Allah Ta'ala and we want to also keep our nafs happy. ...This cannot be. No one can gain the pleasure of Allah Ta'ala and secure His love while pandering to the whims and fancies of nafs and shaytaan.

Just as the person will acquire gems, pearls, gold and silver in return for his money; so too, if the Saalik (Seeker of Allah Ta'ala) is prepared to make the sacrifice and then renders the sacrifices of his evil desires and passions, then from the 'shops' of Ma'rifat, he will be given the pearls and jewels of Ma'rifat.

The Ahlullah have within their hearts an invaluable treasure. They are very generous in sharing because sharing increases their treasure. And if we are able to secure the same, we too will understand the insignificance of Dunya (the material world).

***“O Allah, You have explained Your Value, being both worlds.
If by giving both the worlds, You are attained,
Both worlds are nothing in exchange for Your Love and
Friendship.
Even if a person should sacrifice his life for You,
Then too, the full price has not been paid.
To become martyred for the sake of Your Love,
Is better than a thousand lives,
And many are the Kingdoms to be sacrificed
for Your Bondage.”***

Once Shah Waliullah (رحمة الله عليه) addressed the Moghul Emperors, saying: **Waliullah has a heart that is beautified with the gems and pearls of the Love of Allah Ta'ala. If there is anyone wealthier, come forward! When you die, you will be beneath**

the ground, wrapped in a few sheets, while your power and position, your wealth and treasure will be left behind, above the ground.

These gems and pearls of the Ishq and Ma`rifat of Allah Ta`ala are dependent on how much of qurbaani is made.

“O Friend! Treasures are generally buried in places of destruction. Hence destroy the evil desires and attain the Treasure.”

Until we do not turn our hearts red with the blood of our evil desires, there is no way that we can gain the Ishq, Ma`rifat and Qurb of Allah Ta`ala. There is no Wali (Friend of Allah Ta`ala) who has become a Wali by fulfilling the evil desires of his nafs.

The condition of the sincere ones is :

قُلْ إِنَّ صَلَاتِي وَنُسُكِي وَمَحْيَايَ وَمَمَاتِي لِلَّهِ رَبِّ الْعَالَمِينَ ۝

“SAY: ‘TRULY, MY SALAAH (PRAYER), AND MY SACRIFICE, MY LIFE AND MY DEATH ARE (ALL) FOR ALLAH, THE CHERISHER OF THE WORLDS.’”

[SURAH AN-AN`AAM 6 : 162]

Haqeeqat

Were we to analyse the eras when Muslims throughout the world were dominant, we will find that they had the *Haqeeqat* (reality) of Islam in their lives. They were living Islam – happily, willingly and enthusiastically. They understood their purpose in this world. They understood that they had high and noble objectives to aspire for, because they looked beyond this life.

Before them was their return to their Creator, to Allah Ta’ala; before them was Aakhirah (the Hereafter); before them was Jannah ... and so they exerted themselves in the direction of obedience to Allah Ta’ala and securing His Pleasure.

Allah Ta’ala put into the hearts of people, love for these sincere and obedient servants, and granted them success. There was a dynamic effect when people met with these Muslims, because they not only had the ‘*soorat*’ (outer form), they had the Haqeeqat as well. **People changed their religion, their culture, their dress and their language because they were seeing the beauty and blessings of Islam.**

In the early days of Islam, we see how a small number grew to 500, then 700 and thereafter 1500 - which was something of a great and wonderful accomplishment, considering the odds against the Muslims at that time.

Today, we are plus one billion – but what a difference between the early Muslims and us!

In the 1950s, as a young boy, I recall visiting the museum. There were different animals: omnivores, carnivores and so forth – but they were all stuffed with sawdust. And there were signs near the animals, which read : **‘PLEASE DO NOT TOUCH.’**

Now would we find such a sign in the Kruger National Park, when we go on a safari, wanting to see the Big Five?

When does the king of the jungle require a sign such as: **Please do not touch?**

Yet, in the museum, this sign was placed next to the lion because there was no life in that lion. There was no haqeeqat (reality). Even if it was the king of the jungle – he was now stuffed with sawdust. Rats too could nibble without fear. ...Since there was no life, there was no worry of even a roar.

Looking at the present scenario of the Muslim Ummah – globally, and we see our likeness to those stuffed animals.

We have lost that power and supremacy which is otherwise reserved for the Believers.

The majority of Muslims today have no reality. ...We have ‘stuffed’ our hearts with the love of Dunya and therefore our great weakness and overwhelming incapacity – a prophecy which is so clearly manifest today.

Rasulullah (ﷺ) said: "The People will soon summon one another to attack you as people, when eating, invite others to share their food."

Someone asked, "Will that be because of our small numbers at that time?"

He replied, **"No, you will be numerous at that time: but you will be froth and scum like that carried down by a torrent (of water), and Allah will take the fear of you from the hearts of your enemy and cast *al-wahn* into your hearts."**

Someone asked, "O Messenger of Allah, what is *al-wahn*?"

He replied, **"Love of the world and dislike of death."**²⁶

One billion in number, but how shameful, humiliating and lamentable, that we are subservient to the minority. ...Who is influencing the political and economic climate? Who is manipulating global dynamics? ...Certainly not the Muslims.

The early Muslims had the reality and spirit of Islam. As such, success and victory was theirs for the taking. On the other hand, we want to conquer the world with *soorat* (form) or with talks and literature.

Dominance, Supremacy, Power and Authority do not come with *soorat*. In fact, the majority cannot even be recognized as Muslims – so even *soorat* seems to fall by the way side.

²⁶ Abu Dawood / Ahmad

In one of my trips to Pakistan, I visited someone at his home. There was a bowl of plastic fruit which looked so real – but it was “good for looking”, not good for eating.

Many of us Muslims today are not even “good for looking”. The plastic fruit was a good imitation - but in our *soorat*, there is no imitation also... very much like the Munafiqeen: neither here nor there.

Success and supremacy come with engendering sincere piety in the heart, and living Islam, living the Sunnah ... not selecting what we like and leaving off what our nafs does not incline to.

Allah Ta’ala wants us completely **IN** Islam.

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا ادْخُلُوا فِي السِّلْمِ كَآفَّةً ۖ

"O YOU WHO BELIEVE! ENTER INTO THE FOLD OF ISLAM COMPLETELY..."

[Surah Baqarah 2: 208]

This is the recipe of success. But we will have to bring together the correct ingredients to make that a “flop-proof” success.

The Prohibition of Photography

One of the greatest calamities of our times is the abuse of the camera.

In this day and age, with the easy availability of cell-phones, digital cameras, camcorders, etc. everyone seems to be in possession of a tool which has created an upheaval in mischief.

...How many have had their names dragged through the mud, have been black-mailed, slandered or left humiliated and disgraced due to photographs taken and thereafter circulated?

Photography is an evil which has been entirely misjudged and under-estimated.

Just recently, a brother related a dream to me, requesting an interpretation. I interpreted his dream saying: *'It seems as if movies are being viewed in the Masjid.'*

Within a matter of days, the interpretation was made apparent. We had a visiting 'Aalim give a talk in our Masjid. I was sitting on a chair, near the front, when I observed three young boys very absorbed with their cell phones. I requested a friend to go to the back of the Masjid and see what they were up to. He observed that they were viewing some film with dirty, indecent pictures. **إِنَّا لِلّٰهِ وَ إِنَّا إِلَيْهِ رَاجِعُونَ. We give our children high-technology at the expense of Hayaa (modesty), Deen and Imaan.**

One is to have no shame and commit sins in the presence of Allah Ta'ala, but increasing in shamelessness is when one is brazen enough to commit sins in the presence of Allah Ta'ala, whilst in the Masjid, the House of Allah Ta'ala.

The same shamelessness is found en-masse in the Masjid of all Masaajid, Masjidul Haraam in Makkah Mukarramah. The objective of the majority visiting the Haramain Shareefain these days, is taking photographs and video recording, instead of engaging in Ibaadah.

Complaints - and it is even experience - of flashes and clicks of the camera, seen or heard, whilst Salaah is in progress or whilst in Tawaaf, or whilst at the Raudha Mubarak.

There is a very dire need to explain that this is a grave and serious crime in the sight of Allah Ta'ala.

What needs to be understood is that photography of anything animate is a clear prohibition. It is Haraam.

It has been narrated from Hazrat Jaabir (رَضِيَ اللهُ عَنْهُ) that Rasulullah (ﷺ) forbade pictures in the house and he forbade making them²⁷.

Rasulullah (ﷺ) said: **“Verily, of the most grievously tormented people on the Day of Resurrection are picture-makers.”**²⁸

There are, in fact, many other Ahaadeeth, which clearly prove this prohibition.

²⁷ Tirmidhi

²⁸ Sahih Bukhari

Why did Allah Ta'ala prohibit photography?

One reason is quite clear; that it was the origin of Shirk (polytheism):

Going down the passage of history, we find that mankind was introduced to idol worship through shaytaan's efforts in leading mankind astray. Due to his whispering encouragement, people began to draw and sketch their pious predecessors, thinking that their faces and images will be a source of inspiration and an incentive to also follow in their footsteps of piety. However, it was the means by which many began to worship those pictures, and thereafter carved idols; and idol worship came into vogue.

Whilst this would have been more than sufficient for the Believer, it is no longer considered a worthy reason by Muslims who want to engage in the sin. Many say that there is no way that they would worship a photograph or even a sketch, let alone an idol.

My Shaykh, Hazrat Maulana Hakeem Muhammad Akhtar Saheb (Daamat Barakaatuhum), presented another reason behind the prohibition: **So that Allah Ta'ala may protect the respect and dignity of His servants.**

Many a time, a person who was engaged in various evils is granted Hidayat (guidance). Sometimes, this Hidayat is such that he attains a high stage of Wilayat. The person becomes a great Wali (Friend) of Allah Ta'ala and even a Shaykh, and thousands of people throng to his gatherings. Now at such a

time, if someone were to dig up the pictures of his past ... what embarrassment he would have to endure.

From Allah Ta'ala's side, there is forgiveness of sins, on sincere Taubah²⁹, to the extent, that all evidence is 'deleted' and Insha-Allah, the person will not have to render an account for those sins. However, if photographs were taken, this is evidence which the person has produced **against himself**, and which cannot always be destroyed – especially if it is in the hands of others who wish to bring disgrace to the person.

My Shaykh mentioned this, with reference to an incident, where a woman who was a candidate in one of Pakistan's elections, was blackmailed with photographs of herself in a compromising situation so that she withdraws.

Further to this reason, we find that the porn industry and filthy films are all based on pictures. **Islam nips the problem in the bud by prohibiting photography.**

If everyone practiced upon this teaching, we would not have pornography, woman abuse and exploitation, child pornography, and the evil consequences of rape, insanity, suicide, incest, etc., much of which has shattered and devastated the marriages and homes of even many Muslims.

Now thinking over all these harms, we should appreciate the prohibition all the more and show that appreciation by abstaining. **There is nothing but great wisdom in the prohibitions of Allah Ta'ala, with nothing but good for His servants.**

²⁹ *Taubah* : repentance

Children and Toys

When a child wants a toy which is an animate object or a musical instrument, gently explain to the child that Allah Ta'ala is displeased with such a toy, and that the presence of such toys in our homes, deprives us of the presence of the Malaa'ikah (angels) of Raḥmah (Mercy).

After having explained this, buy something ***better***, ***if*** it is within one's means, of the 'mubaah' (permissible) category – without being extravagant and wasteful.

Considering the fact that most children have all kinds of animate, musical and Haraam (forbidden) toys, do not let the child feel as if he or she is being deprived of play. **...My Shaykh, Hazrat Maulana Hakeem Muhammad Akhtar Saheb (Daamat Barakaatuhum) has explained that we should make our children happy with Halaal so that they grow up loving the beautiful Deen (religion) of Islam.**

The same applies to children's clothing and accessories to be found on the market; much of which has cartoon characters, fictional characters, etc. which would captivate and charm little children; but which the Shariah³⁰ does not permit.

Muslims today consider these restrictions as trivial and irrelevant, whereas there is great wisdom in all the 'Muḥarramaat' (prohibitions) of Islam.

³⁰ *Shariah* : Code of Islamic Law

One of the reasons why children have nightmares is due to the photographs that we bring into our homes, the cartoons and other programmes we allow and encourage them to view, or clothing and toys which are impermissible... Sometimes the room walls are plastered with cartoon characters. Huge teddy bears, dolls and stuffed animals are found all around the room, which result in frightful dreams.

...There are angels who are deputed to look after our children, but these angels do not enter that home where there are pictures of animate objects. This deprives our children of the presence and protection of the angels, who also play with babies.

Rasulullah (ﷺ) said : **“Angels do not enter a house in which there is a dog or a picture.”**³¹

We claim that we are Believers in Allah Ta’ala and His Rasul (ﷺ). If the claim is true and sincere, then it is not acceptable that as Believers in Allah Ta’ala and His Rasul (ﷺ), we debate, argue or reject what are clear injunctions of Shariah. The person who does so, has clearly strayed from the right path...

وَمَا كَانَ لِلْمُؤْمِنِينَ وَلَا الْمُؤْمِنَاتِ إِذَا قَضَى اللَّهُ وَرَسُولُهُ أَمْرًا أَنْ يَكُونَ لَهُمُ الْخِيَرَةُ مِنْ
أَمْرِهِمْ ۗ وَمَنْ يَعْصِ اللَّهَ وَرَسُولَهُ فَقَدْ ضَلَّ ضَلَالًا مُبِينًا ۖ

³¹ Sahih Muslim

“IT IS NOT FITTING FOR A BELIEVER, MAN OR WOMAN, WHEN A MATTER HAS BEEN DECIDED BY ALLAH AND HIS APOSTLE, TO HAVE ANY OPTION ABOUT THEIR DECISION : IF ANYONE DISOBEYS ALLAH AND HIS APOSTLE, HE IS INDEED ON A CLEARLY WRONG PATH.”

[SURAH AHAB 33 : 36]

Allah Ta’ala mentions the response of His sincere servants:

إِنَّمَا كَانَ قَوْلَ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ إِذَا دُعُوا إِلَى اللَّهِ وَرَسُولِهِ لِيَحْكُمَ بَيْنَهُمْ أَنْ يَقُولُوا سَمِعْنَا وَأَطَعْنَا ط وَأُولَئِكَ هُمُ الْمُفْلِحُونَ ۝

وَمَنْ يُطِيعِ اللَّهَ وَرَسُولَهُ وَيَخْشَ اللَّهَ وَيَتَّقْهِ فَأُولَئِكَ هُمُ الْفَائِزُونَ ۝

“THE ANSWER OF THE BELIEVERS, WHEN SUMMONED TO ALLAH AND HIS RASUL, IN ORDER THAT HE MAY JUDGE BETWEEN THEM IS NOT OTHER THAN THIS : THEY SAY, ‘WE HEAR AND WE OBEY.’ IT IS SUCH AS THESE WHO WILL ATTAIN FELICITY.

IT IS SUCH AS OBEY ALLAH AND HIS RASUL, AND FEAR ALLAH AND DO RIGHT, THAT WILL WIN (IN THE END).”

[SURAH NOOR 24 : 51 / 52]

Character

As Muslims, our character, morals and etiquette should differentiate us from others. Non-Muslims are not so attentive to our beautiful Salaah³², Tilawah³³, Zikr³⁴, and other Ibaadaat as they are to our character and dealings with others.

Wherever the Sahabah (رَضِيَ اللهُ عَنْهُمْ) went, it was their character which attracted so many; which often became the focus of attention, as well as admiration.

When Rasulullah³⁵ (صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ) invited the Quraysh to the worship of ONE Allah, he climbed Mount Safa and called out to his people, calling every family of the Quraysh. When they arrived, he asked them: *'If I told you that horsemen were advancing to attack you from the valley on the other side of the hill, would you believe me?'*³⁶

Simultaneously and immediately, they all responded: *'Yes! We have **always** found you honest.'*

Nabi (صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ) presented his credentials to them : **That that person who has never spoken a lie for 40 years, do you think he is going to do so now, in his invitation to the worship of One Allah?**

³² *Salaah* : Prayer performed five times a day. It is an incumbent duty upon every Muslim.

³³ *Tilawat* : Recitation (of the Qur'aan Shareef)

³⁴ *Zikr* : Remembrance (of Allah Ta'ala)

³⁵ *Rasulullah* : The Messenger of Allah Ta'ala

³⁶ Sahih Bukhari

How many of us can present trustworthiness, honesty and truthfulness as outstanding traits within us, let alone beautiful speech and noble etiquette in our dealings with people?

This is one of the main reasons why a large number of non-Muslims remain aloof from Islam. Our poor character and our poor dealings have become a barrier to them coming into Islam. It is as if we are standing at the door of Islam, and keeping them out – or pushing them away. ...Have we ever given a thought as to how we are going to answer for this?

Islam is not only Salaah, Fasting, Hajj³⁷ and 'Umrah³⁸. ...These forms of worship only make up one branch of Shariah. ... The person may be fulfilling the rights of the Creator (Allah Ta'ala) but he is at the same time displeasing Allah Ta'ala by neglecting and violating the rights of the creation (Makhlooq).

There are 5 branches of Shariah :

- Aqaa'id : Beliefs
- Ibaadaat : Worship
- Mu'aamalaat : Business transactions and dealings
- Mu'aasharaat : Social dealings
- Akhlaaq : Character

Every Muslim has to make an effort to correct **all** of these branches for perfection of Islam. It must not be that any one of us returns to Allah Ta'ala with plentiful of Ibaadaat, which subsequently accrues to others and is lost to ourselves.

³⁷ *Hajj* : Pilgrimage to Makkah Sharif during the month of Zul Hijjah. This is the 5th Pillars of Islam.

³⁸ *'Umrah* : The lesser pilgrimage

Hazrat Abu Hurairah (رَضِيَ اللهُ عَنْهُ) related that Nabi (صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ) once asked his companions: ***‘Do you know who is a pauper?’***

The Companions replied that a pauper is a person who has no money or property.

Rasulullah (صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ) said : ***‘A pauper from among my followers (Ummah) is one who will come on the Day of Judgment with a good record of Salaah (prayers) and Saum (fasting) and Zakaah (compulsory charity) but also he had abused somebody; slandered someone or beaten yet another person. Then all the oppressed persons will receive a part of the aggressor’s good deeds. Should they fall short of his aggression, then the aggrieved persons’ sins and defaults will be transferred from them to him, and he will be thrown into the Fire (Hell).’***³⁹

Hazrat Abu Hurairah (رَضِيَ اللهُ عَنْهُ) also related that Rasulullah (صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ) said: ***‘If any Muslim has oppressed his brother, concerning his honour or anything else, let him obtain his pardon today (in this world) before the time comes when he will have neither Dinaars⁴⁰ nor Dirhams⁴¹ (i.e. he will be penniless). If the aggressor may have some good deeds (in his account) the same would be deducted in equal proportion to his wrongs. If the aggressor will have no good deeds in his account, the wrongs of the aggrieved would be added to the account of the aggressor in equal proportion.’***⁴²

³⁹ Sahih Muslim

⁴⁰ Dinaars : gold coins

⁴¹ Dirhams : silver coins

⁴² Sahih Bukhari

I often say : **‘Pay back HERE, to save your back THERE.’**

If we want safety and salvation, we have to get our deeds in order. We need to make amends and compensate for our shortcomings HERE, in this worldly life; otherwise, THERE, on the Day of Resurrection, there will be great regret and humiliation. May Allah Ta’ala guide and protect us all.

Attractions and Distractions

In an accident, or due to a slip or fall, if the **joint** of the shoulder or leg is dislocated, **traction** is normally the means adopted in the healing process.

The sinful, immoral attractions and distractions which form the entertainment of those who have forgotten Allah Ta'ala are such, that they ***dislocate the joints of Imaan***.

The *traction* for indulgence in sins is sincere Taubah (repentance), distancing oneself from sins and from the venues of sins; together with attending good, Deeni programmes and associating with the pious.

...There are so many, so many, who have gone towards some Haraam (forbidden) attraction, never to return therefrom. So many have lost their identity as Muslims, and sometimes they have even lost their Imaan and suffer the great loss of their Aakhirah.

Thousands have died engaging in Haraam entertainment; whether at the casinos, discos, raves, prostitute quarters, massage parlours, in adultery, or some other vice.

One earthquake, one tsunami, one gale-force wind, one fire, and death comes upon thousands – many of whom are also engaged in sins. What guarantee do we have, while indulging in

sins, that we won't be singled out, for our return to Allah Ta'ala?

So think...

And think again!

What would be the condition of that person who comes face to face with the Angel of Death while gambling, drinking, dancing, in raves, adultery or fornication? ...**Which Muslim wants to return to Allah Ta'ala in a state of sin?**

Such matters should not be taken lightly.

The holiday period – even week-ends – are a time of great test and trial : Invitation to sins, promotion of sins, temptation to sins, enticement and encouragement towards all kinds of Haraam is the order of the day.

Beach partying, intermingling and courting, immodest dress, loud music and dance, smoking and drinking and drug-taking then become the programme and timetable for many Muslims. ...Salaah becomes a forgotten duty for holiday-makers. The Islamic dress and identity are discarded so that there is freedom to engage in more sinful activities.

Shaytaan's trump card to Haraam entertainment is even held up by Muslims, who also invite to Haraam just as the non-Muslims do. ... ⁴³ **إِنَّا لِلّٰهِ وَإِنَّا إِلَيْهِ رَاجِعُونَ**

⁴³ To Allah we belong and to Him is our return

Is this what we were created for?

Allah Ta'ala says:

أَفَحَسِبْتُمْ أَنَّمَا خَلَقْنَاكُمْ عَبَثًا وَأَنَّكُمْ إِلَيْنَا لَا تُرْجَعُونَ ۝

**“DID YOU THINK THAT WE CREATED YOU FOR NOTHING, AND THAT YOU
WILL NOT BE BROUGHT BACK TO US?”**

[SURAH MU`MINOON 23 : 115]

The shocking behaviour of our Muslim youth (and even many Muslim adults) leaves us numb, disturbed, distressed and deeply, deeply grieved... What shocking news does the heart have to contend with?

The Muslim youth are supposed to be tomorrow's leaders for the Ummah. They are expected to be the representatives of Deen, inviting the non-Muslims to Islam, with the modesty and purity of thought, speech, dress and actions which should be characteristic of every Muslim.

Deen and Shariah do not stifle us, do not deprive us of pleasure and enjoyment, do not deny us happiness and celebration. Deen and Shariah accommodate leisure and pleasure. **Islam is beautiful. Most beautiful.** Islam is not 'dry'. It is enjoyable. ...Allah Ta'ala has only placed certain boundaries through His Divine prohibitions, for our own benefit, safety and well-being.

So let us make the effort and avoid the temptations towards sins. Let us not walk the route towards sins. Let us keep clear of the venues of sins like how we would if we had fore-knowledge

that there will be an earthquake, tsunami or bomb-blast devastating such places. ...We fear for our lives. **The greater need is to fear for our Imaan and that of our children's Imaan.**

Let us not forget that we are Muslims.

Let us not forget our relationship with Allah Ta'ala.

Let us not forget that death can visit very unexpectedly.

Let us not forget that there is accountability.

Let us not forget Jannah.

Let us not forget Jahannum.

This world is a prison for the Believer and a paradise for the disbeliever. ...What is 'good' for the disbelievers will not be good for the Believers. If they find enjoyment in Haraam, the Muslim will find **HARM** in that same Haraam.

Every person is given the choice. A person either makes a wise decision or an unwise decision.

If we adopt Taqwa⁴⁴, we restrain and abstain from disobedience to Allah Ta'ala, then when we leave this world, we leave behind a prison. When we leave this world, we leave **free**. When the disbeliever leaves this world, he leaves behind his paradise. When he leaves this world, he enters a prison; wherein there is no release, no bail, no escape and no parole.

⁴⁴ *Taqwa* : piety / abstinence from sins

This worldly life is short. Very short. Understand the reality : **Every passing second is delivering us closer and closer to the bridge of death. And there is no choice. We have to cross that bridge.**

My Shaykh, Hazrat Maulana Hakeem Muhammad Akhtar Saheb (Daamat Barakaatuhum) says in poetry:

**“Strange is the visa of life;
It can be cancelled at any time.
The duration of its validity is unknown
And its extension too, impossible.**

Time is running out.

The journey is long. The life after this is **eternal**. **There is no return to this world.**

What preparations have we made? What provisions have we procured?

Nabi (ﷺ) said: **“The intelligent one is he who suppresses his desires and practises for what is after death, and the foolish one is he who makes his nafs follow its desires and (he) places (baseless) hope on Allah.”**⁴⁵

Imam Shaafi (رَحْمَةُ اللَّهِ عَلَيْهِ) summed up this life very simply and aptly:

“This worldly life is a just a moment; let it be a moment of obedience.”

⁴⁵ Tirmidhi

In The Name of Islam

There is a sickness in society which has now reached epidemic proportions. It is so serious that it requires repetition in its warnings to drive the point home.

Fitnahs⁴⁶ abound, and the worst and most dangerous fitnah is that which takes the form and garb of Deen⁴⁷.

In the name and guise of Deen, Muslims are being invited to Fund-raising programmes, lunches, dinners, pre-Ramadaan and Eid Fairs. Funds are being raised for Deeni projects in this manner.

The theme of these programmes is ‘Fun’ and ‘Entertainment’, which entails mixing and socializing. The encouragement is for all to attend – men and women, young and old.

Since this is in the name of Deen, people consider it as something virtuous; as some kind of Ibaadah (worship). ...One can gauge how serious the matter is. The person is not going to make Taubah for this. He is not going to consider the intermingling and the socializing as sinful, because the event is promoted as something meritorious and ‘Halaal’, and because the invitation is from people and organizations that are representing Deen, and whom it is expected, would know better as to what is Haraam and Halaal.

⁴⁶ *Fitnahs*: Trials (It also implies corruption, mischief, etc.)

⁴⁷ *Deen* : religion

**‘What a kind of revolution!
That Ummah which detested Haraam, which stayed far
from that which is doubtful,
now has no fear indulging in Haraam.’**

Even if an ‘Aalim is involved in such activities, or endorsing such programmes, and is seen at such venues, this does not make Haraam, Halaal. ...This is the weakness of that ‘Aalim.

There are so many who are deendaar and they know better than to attend such programmes; their hearts will give them the Fatwa: **‘Don’t go’** – then why still go? ...Thereafter complaints are presented of the immodest dressing of the women, the intermingling of sexes, the disconcerting condition of the youth, etc. ...This is the trap of shaytaan and nafs!

The person is gazing at strange women (or vice versa), engaging the nafs in Haraam pleasure and destroying the heart with evil desires.

Those who project piety, with their dressing, their Khidmat of Deen, their Ta-alluq with the Mashaa`ik, must prove their piety and sincerity by restraining themselves from such fitnah. The instruction and order of Shariah is :

**‘IT IS NOT PERMISSIBLE TO BE PRESENT IN A GATHERING
WHERE ALLAH TA’ALA IS BEING DISOBEYED.’**

Mullah Ali Qaari (رَحْمَةُ اللَّهِ عَلَيْهِ) has defined Hayaa (modesty) as :

“The Haqeeqat (reality) of Hayaa is that your Maula (your Master, Allah Ta’ala) must not find you in that place which He has forbidden.”

...Or indulging in that which He has forbidden.

Such events and functions bring one close to Zina (adultery).
Allah Ta'ala says:

وَلَا تَقْرَبُوا الزَّيْنَىٰ إِنَّهُ كَانَ فَاحِشَةً ۖ وَسَاءَ سَبِيلًا ۝

**“AND COME NOT NEAR TO ZINA. VERILY IT IS A SHAMEFUL
AND EVIL PATH”**

[SURAH AL- ISRA 17 : 32]

These functions promote Zina of the eyes, whereas it is from the Commandments of Allah Ta'ala that we lower our gazes from looking at ghair-mahareem. Allah Ta'ala addresses both the believing men and believing women:

قُلْ لِلْمُؤْمِنِينَ يَغُضُّوا مِنْ أَبْصَارِهِمْ وَيَحْفَظُوا فُرُوجَهُمْ ۖ ذَٰلِكَ أَزْكَىٰ لَهُمْ ۖ
إِنَّ اللَّهَ خَبِيرٌ بِمَا يَصْنَعُونَ ۝

**“TELL THE BELIEVING MEN TO LOWER THEIR GAZE
(FROM LOOKING AT THAT WHICH IS HARAAM) AND TO BE MODEST
(I.E. TO PROTECT THEMSELVES FROM PROHIBITED DEEDS LIKE ADULTERY
AND FORNICATION). THAT IS PURER FOR THEM.
VERILY ALLAH IS AWARE OF WHAT THEY DO.”**

وَقُلْ لِلْمُؤْمِنَاتِ يَغْضُضْنَ مِنْ أَبْصَارِهِنَّ وَيَحْفَظْنَ فُرُوجَهُنَّ
وَلَا يُبْدِينَ زِينَتَهُنَّ

**... AND TELL THE BELIEVING WOMEN TO LOWER THEIR GAZE (FROM
LOOKING AT THAT WHICH IS FORBIDDEN) AND TO BE MODEST AND NOT
TO SHOW OFF THEIR BEAUTY...**

[SURAH NUR 24 : 30/ 31]

Young men have written to me and have mentioned quite explicitly that their intentions in frequenting such functions, fairs and programmes is for no other purpose but to admire the women. Some have even mentioned deriving Haraam pleasure by deliberately touching those women in the crowd (نَعُوذُ بِاللَّهِ مِنْ ذَلِكَ)⁴⁸ – and if these are not our wives, then they are our daughters or mothers or sisters or nieces, who are exposed to lustful glances and physical contact with strangers.

So when it is plainly evident that these programmes and fairs are against the Pleasure of Allah Ta’ala, **we can stop ourselves and our families**, even if we cannot stop others.

Moreover, we should keep in mind that Rasulullah (ﷺ) said: **“The most beloved places in the Sight of Allah are the Masaajid, and the most disliked places in the Sight of Allah, are the markets.”**⁴⁹

⁴⁸ (نَعُوذُ بِاللَّهِ مِنْ ذَلِكَ) *Na-oozu Billahi min zaalik*: We seek Allah’s protection from that.

⁴⁹ Sahih Muslim

Immediate Wilayat

Allah Ta'ala mentions in the Qur'aan Shareef:

إِنَّ اللَّهَ يُحِبُّ التَّوَّابِينَ

“... VERILY ALLAH LOVES THOSE WHO REPENT...”

[SURAH BAQARAH 2 : 222]

A young person, after listening to a talk, experienced a revolution in his heart. He asked me : *“With my past, with the sins in my life, how is it possible for me to become a Wali⁵⁰?”*

I said : *“It is extremely simple. It takes just one minute to become a Wali. Raise your hands and with deep regret and remorse in your heart, shed a few tears and pray to Allah : ‘O Allah, I have wasted my life, but I want to become Your Wali; I want to become Your friend. So forgive all the sins which I have committed since maturity, and grant me the Taufeeq⁵¹ to do that which pleases You in my future life.’*

*You have immediately become a Wali. Now make an effort towards fulfilling those rights which had been violated. **The effort made indicates to the sincerity of your Taubah.**”*

If Salaah and Fasts were missed, then *Qaza* must necessarily be made. If *Zakaah*, *Qurbaani* and *Sadaqatul Fitr* were not fulfilled, such monies must necessarily be paid. The same applies to

⁵⁰ *Wali* : Friend of Allah Ta'ala

⁵¹ *Taufeeq* : Divine Assistance to do good deeds.

monies which are owing to people. Pay back to whomsoever, what is due, or ask them to forgive. If not, then that Taubah will not be complete. And if harm and injury was caused to another, his or her forgiveness should be sought.

If there are a number of outstanding Salaah or fasts due, it is obvious that a person cannot read all the Qazas⁵² in one day, or keep all his missed fasts in one day. This will take due time. **However, the intention of the person, to fulfil all dues of Allah Ta'ala and creation, and the effort made in that direction makes the person a friend and beloved of Allah Ta'ala.**

If the person does not make any effort in that direction after Taubah, this is a clear sign that he was not sincere in his repentance.

Also, in respect to his future life, every effort should be made not to return to sins.

⁵² *Qaza* : Religious duty performed after the expiry of its time.

Bringing Life into the Heart

When a hen lays enough eggs, her effort is then to incubate her eggs. We observe how she sits on the eggs, and is so committed to the process, that she only leaves her eggs for a few minutes in a day, when she needs to eat and drink.

As is well-known, it takes twenty one days for the eggs to hatch - that is, if they are properly incubated by the hen. So for almost all that time, the hen sits on the eggs. The embryo develops inside the egg in that period of time, until a chick pecks its way out of its eggshell and is hatched.

When life comes into that chick, the chick does not require any assistance to come out. It does not wait for its mother to crack the shell so that it may come out. It is able to crack the shell itself.

Once the eggs hatch, the hen continues to stay on the nest for weeks thereafter, occupying herself in raising her chicks. She teaches them survival skills and how to look for food.

Together with providing her chicks with warmth and the shelter of her wings, she fervently protects her brood from anyone who dares to disturb them. She constantly worries over them and keeps them close to her, knowing that her little ones are vulnerable to predators. ...We have seen how the chicks hide under the wings of the mother hen.

A beautiful lesson is drawn from this natural phenomenon:

The Saalik⁵³ or Mureed⁵⁴ who takes cover and refuge in the sanctuary of the Shaykh-e-Kaamil⁵⁵ will find spiritual life being generated in him. **The Suhbah (company) of the Shaykh-e-Kaamil is akin to the incubation process, whereby spiritual life is generated into the Mureed.**

Just as there is a required period for the chick's development and growth, so too, the Mureed or the Saalik is required to spend sufficient time with the Shaykh to draw that spiritual life within his heart. Naturally, and it should go without saying, the intention must be sincere.

In the company of the Shaykh-e-Kaamil, the sincere Saalik finds a change overcoming his heart, he finds the love and fear of Allah Ta'ala flourishing in his heart, he finds the courage and capacity to give up sins, and he finds the inclination and strength to do good deeds.

...Often, through the noble company and guidance of the Shaykh, the Mureed is able to abandon sins more easily. Of course, some striving (Mujahadah) and sacrifice (qurbaani) are required. But it becomes easy to become '*muttaqi*' or pious in the right company.

And this is the Command and Direction of Allah Ta'ala (i.e. to keep the company of the pious):

⁵³ *Saalik* : Seeker (of Allah Ta'ala)

⁵⁴ *Mureed*: Disciple

⁵⁵ *Shaykh-e-Kaamil* : Experienced, learned, practising and pious spiritual mentor

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا اتَّقُوا اللَّهَ وَكُونُوا مَعَ الصَّادِقِينَ ۝

“O YOU WHO BELIEVE, FEAR ALLAH AND JOIN THE COMPANY OF THE TRUTHFUL ONES (THE PIOUS, THE AULIYA ALLAH).”

[SURAH TAUBAH 9 : 119]

Through the Suhbat, Du’aa and Tawajjuh (attention) of the Shaykh, the Saalik is able to easily crack the shell of all *ma’siyyat* or sins. He will be able to un-shackle himself from the chains of nafs and shaytaan. And when a person makes ‘*fanaa*’ of (i.e. destroys) the evil desires of his heart (qalb), Allah Ta’ala grants that heart, ‘*Hayaat*’ (life).

Once there is life in the heart, all parts of the body will function properly, as has been explained by Rasulullah (ﷺ):

“There is a piece of flesh in the body, if it becomes good (reformed), the whole body becomes good but if it gets corrupted, the whole body gets corrupted – and that is the heart.”⁵⁶

Thus, the heart is the focal and central point for reformation and spiritual life. The simple and most successful means for the heart’s reformation and life (*Hayaat*), is ‘*join the company of the Truthful Ones.*’

As has been aptly conveyed in poetry:

**‘My journey has become easy;
Even the winds have changed direction.
...When your hand came into my hand,
Even the lamps of the road lit up.’**

⁵⁶ Sahih Bukhari

Like the hen, we find that the Kaamil Shaykh offers protection to those who come under the wings of his spiritual care and nurture. He guides and directs them to recognizing the predators that are out hunting them – i.e. nafs and shaytaan. He teaches them how to find their spiritual food, through various good deeds and through good character; through following the Sunnah and through practicing on Deen and Shariah.

He, himself, is constantly burdened with the responsibility and obligation of attending to them, but he earnestly continues in his efforts.

The Auliya Allah are '*mahfooz*' (protected by Allah Ta'ala) so the Shaykh-e-Kaamil is also in the special protection of Allah Ta'ala, and in this manner, those who keep his company benefit from that protection, especially against nafs and shaytaan.

...And this is the experience whilst in the company of the Shaykh. Many do not even feel the inclination to commit sins; rather the inclination is to do good deeds.

One of our Mashaa'ik defined **Deen** as the name for 'Hayaat-e-Qalbi'.

If a person develops 'Hayaat-e-Qalbi' – i.e. he adopts Taqwa, life will automatically come into his Deen. **Knowledge comes into practice. Good deeds come to life.**

In a Hadeeth, Rasulullah (ﷺ) said : ‘...**Taqwa is here.**’⁵⁷ and he pointed towards his heart, repeating this statement thrice.

Taqwa is the life of the spiritual heart. Without Taqwa or ‘Hayaat-e-Qalbi’, there is only the casing of Deen.

Presently, what we have is the shape and form of Ibaadaat. Even though our bodies are occupied in Ibaadaat, there is no spirit, soul or ‘kaifiyyat’⁵⁸ because there is no Hayaat-e-Qalbi, because there is no Taqwa; there is no abstinence from sins.

Furthermore, Hayaat-e-Qalbi guarantees Hayaatan - Tayyibah (a good life). Allah Ta’ala mentions in the Qur’aan Shareef:

مَنْ عَمِلَ صَالِحًا مِّنْ ذَكَرٍ أَوْ أُنْثَىٰ وَهُوَ مُؤْمِنٌ فَلَنُحْيِيَنَّهٗ حَيٰوةً طَيِّبَةً ۚ وَلَنَجْزِيَنَّهُمْ أَجْرَهُمْ بِأَحْسَنِ مَا كَانُوا يَعْمَلُونَ ۝

“WHOEVER DOES RIGHTEOUSNESS, WHETHER MALE OR FEMALE, WHILE HE IS A BELIEVER - WE WILL SURELY CAUSE HIM TO LIVE A GOOD LIFE, AND WE WILL SURELY GIVE THEM THEIR REWARD [IN THE HEREAFTER] ACCORDING TO THE BEST OF WHAT THEY USED TO DO.”

[SURAH AN-NAHL 16 : 97]

The heart which has no ‘Hayaat’ is a heart devoid of the Tajalli⁵⁹ of Allah Ta’ala. There are so many who can be seeing the truth, but at the same time they are not seeing it, since there is no acknowledgement by the heart. Many

⁵⁷ Sahih Muslim

⁵⁸ *Kaifiyyat* : spiritual feeling / experience

⁵⁹ *Tajalli* : Special Mercy

can be listening to the truth, but they are not listening to anything, since there is no belief and acceptance in the heart. Such a heart has become hardened, so much so that it is not even considered a heart...

Allah Ta'ala says regarding the Bani Israeel :

ثُمَّ قَسَتْ قُلُوبُكُم مِّنْ بَعْدِ ذَلِكَ فَهِيَ كَالْحِجَارَةِ أَوْ أَشَدُّ قَسْوَةً ط

**‘THENCEFORTH WERE YOUR HEARTS HARDENED : THEY BECAME LIKE A
ROCK AND EVEN WORSE IN HARDNESS.’**

[SURAH BAQARAH 2 : 72]

May Allah Ta'ala, out of His Infinite Kindness, bless us all with spiritual life and strength, and safeguard us from the hardness of the heart, from death of the spiritual heart. May Allah Ta'ala afford us the good fortune that our life and death be amidst His Auliya Allah and that we too become His Friends.

Holding a good opinion of the deceased

After a Believer is buried, we should **not** have the opinion that the person is suffering the ‘a_zaab’ (punishment) of ‘Qabr’⁶⁰, even if he or she was involved in sin. **We should hold a good opinion of the dead.**

Imam Abu Dawood (رَحْمَةُ اللَّهِ عَلَيْهِ) narrated that Rasulullah (صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ) said : ***“Make mention of the virtues of your dead, and refrain from (mentioning) their evils.”***

It may well be that the person has already secured Divine Forgiveness. We do not know which action of the deceased, during his lifetime, earned him the pleasure of Allah Ta’ala and gained him, Najaat (salvation) and Jannah⁶¹. **Moreover, the deceased has already traversed where we still have to journey. What do we know of the conditions to meet us at the time of death and after?**

Rasulullah (صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ) said : *‘Forgiveness was granted to a prostitute. She came upon a dog at the mouth of a well, that was panting, and about to die of thirst. She took off her leather sock, tied it with her headscarf, and drew some water from the well for the dog. It was for this act of kindness that she was forgiven her sins.’*

⁶⁰ Qabr : literally means, grave. (Also refers to the period after death till the Day of Resurrection.)

⁶¹ Jannah : Paradise

When Rasulullah (ﷺ) was asked, ‘Are we rewarded even for the good we do to animals?’

Rasulullah (ﷺ) replied: **‘Reward is given for good done to any living creature.’**⁶²

Reading such an incident does not mean that we just look for some thirsty dog, give it some water and then be confident of our forgiveness. Every Hadeeth Shareef must be understood in its proper context.

Does a person steal or commit some other crime a day before the president’s birthday because he heard that the president of the country gives amnesty and releases many prisoners on his birthday? ...No.

Even though Allah Ta’ala’s Mercy and Forgiveness searches for opportunities, we should not be fooled and misled by shaytaan to commit sins based on this fact.

Whilst there is no doubt that Allah Ta’ala is Most Forgiving and Most Merciful, Allah Ta’ala also punishes those who are **persistent** in sins and negligent in obedience.

Allah Ta’ala states in the Qur’aan Shareef :

وَإِنَّ رَبَّكَ لَذُو مَغْفِرَةٍ لِلنَّاسِ عَلَى ظُلْمِهِمْ ۚ وَإِنَّ رَبَّكَ لَشَدِيدُ الْعِقَابِ ۝

‘... BUT VERILY YOUR LORD IS FULL OF FORGIVENESS FOR MANKIND FOR THEIR WRONG-DOING. AND VERILY YOUR LORD IS (ALSO) STRICT IN PUNISHMENT.’

[SURAH RA’D 13 : 6]

⁶² Sahih Muslim

Securing Rewards in Marriage

The Sawaab (reward) for the sabr (patience) a woman exercises over her difficulties in managing the home of her husband and fulfilling the rights of her husband and children can make her 'reach' Allah Ta'ala very quickly. This, however, is **conditional** to her obedience to Allah Ta'ala; fulfilling His rights, the rights of His Rasul (ﷺ), as well as the rights of His Creation.

Women who have a number of children, sometimes even a temperamental husband, together with many household chores and other responsibilities, sometimes think that they cannot achieve the ranks of the Auliya Allah⁶³ because they do not have time for 'wazeefas'⁶⁴ and Nawaafil (optional prayers).

I tell them that they need not worry about too many wazeefas. **The most important 'wazeefa' is abstinence from all sins. Added to this, they should just correct their Niyyah or intention, in all that they are doing as routine housework. Make the intention of pleasing Allah Ta'ala, then that same housework becomes Ibaadah. In this simple way, they will easily secure great rewards and the same spiritual stages, if not higher.**

Similarly, the Sawaab for the sabr (patience) a man exercises over his wife's shortcomings, emotional outbursts or mood swings is a medium by which he too acquires great rewards and

⁶³ *Auliya Allah* : Friends of Allah Ta'ala

⁶⁴ *Wazeefas* : additional, optional supplications

reaches Allah Ta'ala very, very quickly.

Many Auliya Allah reached great spiritual heights, and were accepted for tremendous service to Deen on the patience they adopted with their wives, and on the love, care, affection, tenderness and generosity they also extended to their wives.

Rasulullah (ﷺ) set the perfect example for all. Despite the tremendous responsibilities that he was entrusted with, he gave due attention and time to his wives and treated them with love and generosity. He was never harsh or insensitive towards any single wife.

Rasulullah (ﷺ) said: **“The best amongst the Believers is he whose character is the best. And the best among you is the one who is best towards his wife.”**⁶⁵

⁶⁵ Sahih Muslim / Tirmidhi

Integrity and Honesty

It has been mentioned in a Hadeeth that a pious person from the Bani Israel took a loan of one thousand gold coins, and fixing a date, promised to pay back at that time. The person giving the loan required witnesses.

The pious person said : *'Allah is sufficient as a witness.'*

He was then asked : *'Who stands surety on your behalf?'*

The person replied : *'Allah is sufficient as a surety.'*

The person, giving the loan, accepted this, saying : *'You have spoken the truth.'* And without further consideration, handed over one thousand gold coins.

On the due date, due to flood, the pious person could not find a boat to take him across the river, to his creditor, to make the payment. **This both perplexed him and hurt his conscience.**

...The people of the past had integrity and honesty. They stood by their word. The thought of deliberately breaking their promises or going against their word did not even pass through their minds. They were averse to hypocrisy and did not allow it to taint their hearts. They stayed clear of those qualities which Rasulullah (ﷺ) described as qualities of the hypocrites.

Rasululullah (ﷺ) said: *"Four are the qualities which, when found in a person, make him a complete hypocrite, and one who possesses one of them, possesses one characteristic of hypocrisy until he abandons it. These are: **When he is entrusted with something, he betrays trust; when he speaks, he lies; when he promises, he acts treacherously; and when he argues, he becomes vulgar.***

...However, such was this pious person's predicament.

Having found some wood, he made a hollow in that piece of wood, and in a state of desperation, placed one thousand gold coins and a note therein, that it be given to such and such a person and then sealed it.

Since this person's Niyah (intention) was correct, he became recipient to Allah Ta'ala's assistance.

Taking the piece of wood to the river, he said: *'O Allah! You know well that I took a loan of one thousand Dinaars from so and so. He demanded a surety from me but I told him that Allah's guarantee was sufficient and he accepted Your guarantee. He then asked for a witness and I told him that Allah was sufficient as a witness, and he accepted You as a witness. No doubt, I have tried hard to find a conveyance so that I could pay him his money but could not find one, so I hand over this money to You.'* So saying, he threw the piece of wood into the river and placed his trust in Allah Ta'ala.

On the other side, the creditor was waiting for the arrival of the boat that was to bring his money. He went to the riverbank and

as he paced about, losing hope in his debtor returning, he noticed the log (wherein his money was deposited). He picked it up and took it home to use as firewood.

When he struck the axe against the log and it split open, he found the one thousand gold coins with the note, wherein his debtor had written, that since he could not get a boat in due time, he had opted to mete out payment in this manner, trusting solely in Allah Ta'ala.

On return, the pious person was anxious to find out if his creditor had received the money or not. Taking with him another one thousand gold coins, he went to the creditor's home with the intention of making a late payment, had the creditor not received his money.

After having explained his plight and offering the thousand gold coins, the creditor **truthfully** told him that Allah Ta'ala had already delivered the money which he had sent in the piece of wood, and the pious person was told to keep the one thousand gold coins which he had brought with him.

...That was their level of honesty and trustworthiness and for that, Allah Ta'ala gave them plenty of Barakah (blessings)... A far cry from present day experiences with even Muslim businessmen and traders.

Because of the temptations faced by traders⁶⁶, Rasulullah (ﷺ) enumerated many great rewards for the honest

⁶⁶ *Mu'aamalaat* is a branch of Shariah, dealing with business and trade. It is compulsory (Fardh) upon a person involved in business and trade to learn the relevant masaa'il (rules).

trader. It is mentioned in a Hadeeth that an honest and trustworthy merchant shall be with the Ambiyaa⁶⁷ (عليهم السلام)⁶⁸, the Martyrs and the pious.

Allah Ta'ala opens the doors of Rizq (sustenance) and Barakah (blessings) for the honest and truthful ones.

Allah Ta'ala has presented various ordinances on loans, which we are instructed to implement in our transactions. This is **especially** necessary in these times of hypocrisy, cheating and deception, when we cannot even trust some of those who have adopted the garb of the pious and have a connection with the Masjid (mosque) and with Deen. Due to fraudulent deals, even family members and friends are not being trusted anymore.

In Surah Baqarah, Allah Ta'ala states :

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا إِذَا تَدَايَنْتُمْ بِدَيْنٍ إِلَى أَجَلٍ مُّسَمًّى فَاكْتُبُوهُ ط

‘O THOSE WHO BELIEVE, WHEN YOU TRANSACT A DEBT PAYABLE AT A SPECIFIED TIME, PUT IT IN WRITING. ...’

ذَلِكُمْ أَقْسَطُ عِنْدَ اللَّهِ وَأَقْوَمُ لِلشَّهَادَةِ وَأَدْنَىٰ أَلَّا تَرْتَابُوا

... THAT IS MORE EQUITABLE WITH ALLAH AND MORE ESTABLISHING FOR THE EVIDENCE AND NEARER TO THAT YOU FALL NOT IN DOUBT...’

[SURAH BAQARAH 2 : 282]

Allah Ta'ala clearly outlines and establishes various directives to

⁶⁷ Ambiyaa : Prophets

⁶⁸ (عليهم السلام): ‘May peace be upon them’.

a loan in this Ayah (verse), which has more details of importance.

The gist of which, directs towards a written document to be drafted for such transactions, wherein the names of all parties, the analysis, exact due date of payment and fine points of the transaction are distinctly and unambiguously stated. The wisdom behind written agreements is precaution against breach, oversight, misunderstanding or dispute and conflict at a later stage.

Allah Ta'ala also calls for witnesses to such transactions, since they would verify and resolve any dispute that may arise in future.

May Allah Ta'ala grant us the noble qualities of honesty, truthfulness, trustworthiness and sincerity in our dealings with people.

Hearts of Gold

My respected Shaykh, Hazrat Maulana Hakeem Muhammad Akhtar Saheb (Daamat Barakaatuhum) says in poetry :

***“O Allah, we will choose the company of those who please You;
We will not keep company with those hearts
which do not have You.”***

No one can deny the effect of company. Good company offers good influence and the opposite proves true, in that bad company offers bad influence. Companionship and friendship pave the way to either success or failure. Therefore Rasulullah (ﷺ) said: **“A person is on the Deen (way of life) of his friend, so every one of you should look at who he befriends.”**⁶⁹

We are living in a time where there is mass production of “imitation” and “artificial” products. They appear genuine, but in the test of their quality, they prove to be artificial or just cheap imitation.

In the same way, we find the condition of hearts. The majority walk around with artificial or imitation hearts. Their worth is made known sooner or later, when we find infidelity, dishonesty, greed, deceit, double-standards, etc. Who we thought to be a friend, turns out to be an enemy.

Then we have the Auliya Allah – the friends of Allah Ta’ala.

⁶⁹ Abu Dawood / Tirmidhi

Their hearts are genuine “metal”; **genuine gold**. Their hearts have undergone various tests which make known their value.

When gold is mined from the earth, it is first pulverized and crushed and thereafter placed in a furnace. Despite its value, **it has to be purified**.

Thus we find that that gold is purified by the means of smelting, which requires pressure, high heat and chemicals to remove the impurities contained in it. Only after this intense process or ‘Mujahadah’, the gold is in its purest form.

It is melted and poured into moulds to form bars or nuggets. This is now the precious, pure gold that demands a high price in the markets, which is utilized in making jewellery and so forth.

In a similar vein, we find the hearts of the Auliya Allah undergoing a purification process as well: Their hearts experience the pulverizing and crushing of evil desires in resisting the demands of the nafs. Together with this are the efforts in striving to earn the Pleasure of Allah Ta’ala, through His Obedience. These are the means which make up the purification process, until they reach that stage, that level, where their hearts are like the pure gold.

We hear the cliché: ***“He / She has a heart of gold.”*** This generally indicates to a good heart, a generous heart – **but a heart of genuine “gold” is the heart which belongs to a Wali of Allah Ta’ala.**

Just as we have genuine gold stamped with its carat : 18ct,

22ct, 24ct, these Ahlullah have their hearts stamped by Allah Ta'ala, of His Friendship, because they proved "genuine" in their faithfulness and obedience to Him and His Rasul (ﷺ). Their hearts have the stamp of the 'gold' of Nisbat-ma-Allah (Connection with Allah Ta'ala). May Allah Ta'ala make our hearts pure 'gold' and stamp them with His Pleasure.

A Mu'min (Believer) looks for people with such hearts. If a person is faithful to Allah Ta'ala and Rasulullah (ﷺ), we can expect him to be faithful to the creation. If the person is unfaithful to Allah Ta'ala and His Rasul (ﷺ), this is a sure indication, that he will be unfaithful – in some way or the other – to people.

We should not only keep the noble company of the Friends of Allah Ta'ala; we should aspire and work towards acquiring that heart of gold as well.

Allah Ta'ala gives us direction in respect to who we will find to be genuine friends:

إِنَّمَا وَلِيُّكُمُ اللَّهُ وَرَسُولُهُ وَالَّذِينَ آمَنُوا الَّذِينَ يُقِيمُونَ الصَّلَاةَ

وَيُؤْتُونَ الزَّكَاةَ وَهُمْ رَاكِعُونَ ۝

“YOUR (REAL) FRIENDS ARE (NO LESS THAN) ALLAH, HIS APOSTLE, AND THE (FELLOWSHIP OF) BELIEVERS – THOSE WHO ESTABLISH REGULAR PRAYERS, AND REGULAR CHARITY, AND THEY BOW DOWN HUMBLY (IN WORSHIP).”

[SURAH MAA'IDAH 5 : 58]

And further:

وَالْمُؤْمِنُونَ وَالْمُؤْمِنَاتُ بَعْضُهُمْ أَوْلِيَاءُ بَعْضٍ ۖ يَأْمُرُونَ بِالْمَعْرُوفِ وَيَنْهَوْنَ عَنِ الْمُنْكَرِ

“THE BELIEVERS, MEN AND WOMEN, ARE AULIYA (HELPERS/ FRIENDS/ SUPPORTERS/ PROTECTORS) OF ONE ANOTHER, THEY ENJOIN (ON THE PEOPLE) AL-MA’RUF (THAT WHICH ISLAM ORDERS ONE TO DO), AND FORBID (PEOPLE) FROM AL-MUNKAR (THAT WHICH ISLAM HAS FORBIDDEN)...”

[SURAH TAUBAH 9 : 71]

Watering the Root

The main reason for being unable to solve the many problems the Muslim community is facing presently is that we are misdirecting our energies in 'watering leaves', when in actual fact, the 'root' is in dire need of water. ...**We are not getting to the root of the problem, since we are too pre-occupied in watering the leaves of our problems.**

Take the example of Zina (adultery and fornication) which is the scourge of our society: The consequences are illegitimate children, abortions and various physical and deathly diseases. It is common knowledge that many physical ailments today point to immoral, unrestrained behaviour as the cause.

Having moved away from the Nasihah (advice) of Qur'aan Shareef and Sunnah, and drawing from the manner in which the non-Muslims try to remedy their problems, many will suggest that a home be built for illegitimate and abandoned children, that more awareness be instilled in the youth on Aids and other transmitted diseases, and so forth.

As we all know, drugs are another major problem amongst our youth. Our attention to remedying the situation is building rehabilitation centres.

...Because we have adopted the Western way of thinking, we consider these the solutions.

The root cause is the heart. Change the condition of the heart and automatically sins will be given up.

If the spiritual heart is in a good condition, the actions will be good. If the heart is not in good condition, the actions will be bad. The person will suffer due to his own evil and mischief, and others will also suffer as a result.

The supreme qualities of the heart are Imaan and Taqwa, and this is what is lacking in most people. Shariah has laid tremendous emphasis on the purification of the heart.

Rasulullah (ﷺ) lived amongst a people who were immersed in sins, including sins such as adultery, liquor and gambling. His approach and method in eradicating those major problems, in that society, was creating the love of Allah Ta'ala, the Khauf (fear) of Qiyaamah and accountability, and the awareness that Allah Ta'ala is watching every deed: **A person can hide and conceal his sins from people but there is Someone who is always watching from above.**

Allah Ta'ala says in the Qur'aan Shareef :

إِنَّ رَبَّكَ لَبِالْمُرْصَادِ ۝

“VERILY YOUR LORD IS EVER – WATCHFUL (OVER THEM).”

[SURAH AL-FAJR 89 : 14]

وَهُوَ مَعَكُمْ أَيْنَ مَا كُنْتُمْ ۖ وَاللَّهُ بِمَا تَعْمَلُونَ بَصِيرٌ ۝

**“... AND HE IS WITH YOU WHERESOEVER YOU MAY BE.
AND ALLAH SEES WELL ALL THAT YOU DO.”**

[SURAH HADEED 57 : 4]

In this manner, so many problems are solved in one capsule – The capsule of the Love and Fear of Allah Ta’ala. This is the real solution : Change the condition of the heart. Awaken the spiritual heart. Make the heart conscious of Allah Ta’ala.

Otherwise funds are being terribly burdened on various projects which are sometimes short term measures and not solutions.

The purpose of the Qur’aan Shareef is to learn it, understand it and practice upon its teachings.

It is the Qur’aan Shareef that works on the heart : If the person keeps before him the four witnesses which will either testify in his favour or against him, on the Day of Qiyaamah, he will definitely opt for abstinence from sins.

These four witnesses are :

I. The Earth, which witnesses our deeds:

يَوْمَئِذٍ تُحَدِّثُ أَخْبَارَهَا ۚ

“ON THAT DAY WILL SHE (THE EARTH) DECLARE HER TIDINGS.”

[SURAH ZILZAAL 99 :4]

II. The Angels, Kiraaman Kaatibeen, who record all of our actions :

وَإِنَّ عَلَيْكُمْ لَحَافِظِينَ ۚ كِرَامًا كَاتِبِينَ ۚ يَعْلَمُونَ مَا تَفْعَلُونَ ۚ

“BUT VERILY OVER YOU (ARE APPOINTED ANGELS) TO PROTECT YOU;

KIND AND HONOURABLE, WRITING DOWN (YOUR DEEDS).

THEY KNOW (AND UNDERSTAND) ALL THAT YOU DO.”

[SURAH INFIJAAR 82 : 10 / 11 / 12]

III. Our Book of Deeds, in which the actions are recorded :

وَوُضِعَ الْكِتَابُ فَتَرَى الْمُجْرِمِينَ مُشْفِقِينَ مِمَّا فِيهِ وَيَقُولُونَ يُوَلِّتُنَا مَا لَ هَذَا الْكِتَابِ
لَا يُغَادِرُ صَغِيرَةً وَلَا كَبِيرَةً إِلَّا أَحْصَاهَا ۚ وَوَجَدُوا مَا عَمِلُوا حَاضِرًا ۖ
وَلَا يَظْلِمُ رَبُّكَ أَحَدًا ۝

“AND THE BOOK (OF DEEDS) WILL BE PLACED (BEFORE YOU); AND YOU WILL SEE THE SINFUL IN GREAT TERROR BECAUSE OF WHAT IS (RECORDED) THEREIN; THEY WILL SAY : ‘AH! WOE TO US! WHAT A BOOK IS THIS ! IT LEAVES OUT NOTHING. SMALL OR GREAT, BUT TAKES ACCOUNT THEREOF!’ THEY WILL FIND ALL THAT THEY DID, PLACED BEFORE THEM : AND NOT ONE WILL YOUR LORD TREAT WITH INJUSTICE.”

[SURAH KAHF 18 : 49]

IV. Limbs of the body, which will testify against the person :

الْيَوْمَ نَخْتِمُ عَلَى أَفْوَاهِهِمْ وَتُكَلِّمُنَا أَيْدِيهِمْ وَتَشْهَدُ أَرْجُلُهُمْ بِمَا كَانُوا يَكْسِبُونَ ۝

“THAT DAY SHALL WE SET A SEAL ON THEIR MOUTHS. BUT THEIR HANDS WILL SPEAK TO US, AND THEIR FEET BEAR WITNESS, TO ALL THAT THEY DID.”

[SURAH YAASEEN 36 :65]

If the root of Imaan, which is in the heart, is watered, the tree of Imaan will bear the fruit of obedience.

The above is the solution to all our problems.

May Allah Ta’ala grant us the understanding and the Taufeeq of Amal.

Evidence of Sins

Destroy the reminders and evidence of sin and evil. They are stepping-stones to returning to the same sins. Reminders include photographs of those places where sins were committed; even if the pictures are not animate.

...When a person will see the photograph of the hotel, tourist resort, etc. where he committed Zina (adultery), shaytaan will take him down memory lane and give him the Haraam enjoyment of his past sin. This, in turn, could lead to the sin itself.

If some gift was given by an illicit beloved, destroy it or give it away.

One should also not diarise sins as is the habit of so many.

Many girls keep diaries, with even locks and keys. ...If these diaries are opened by others, pages of sins indulged in, of fancies and fantasies are revealed, and the person suffers humiliation and disgrace.

The same with smses and e-mails which are saved on cell-phones or on computer, or letters and faxes which are stored away. **All can be implicating evidence against a person and can lead to not only disgrace, but distrust and even the dissolution of friendship and marriage.**

There have been incidents of families that have met up with accidents, or were victims to hijackings or robberies, and all members were killed. ...These are happenings that we hear of and read of these days.

Thereafter, other members of the family have to sort out the estate, and this is when the dark secrets are exposed.

A person contacted me, saying that an entire family was killed in an accident – the husband, wife and children. As such, other members of the family had to enter the home to sort out the estate. On opening the one cupboard in the main bedroom, they were shocked to find porn magazines, films, etc. whereas they knew the husband to be an upright Muslim, a Namaazi⁷⁰, etc.

...Is this not embarrassment and disgrace?

There is no guarantee that the wife will survive the husband to conceal his secret sins, or the husband will survive the wife, to conceal her sins. ...Someone is going to enter that home and all will be exposed.

May Allah Ta'ala grant us all the realization that death can visit at any time and that evidence of sins opens doors of problems and disgrace.

⁷⁰ *Namaazi* : One who is regular with his Salaah

Islamic Law

We want Islamic law to conform to our liking, so much so that we will find some Fatwa (Islamic ruling or verdict) to justify our actions.

The ordinary laymen, and so too many who are highly qualified in the secular field, read the Qur'aan Shareef and authentic Hadeeth kitaabs⁷¹ such as Sahih Bukhari and Sahih Muslim, and find some Ayah (verse) or Hadeeth to justify their actions.

Often, the Ayah or Hadeeth is taken out of context and expounded to justify *grave* and *major* sins.

Each Ayah and Hadeeth has an explanation and commentary. If there was no need for explanations, we would not have had Allama Sayyid Maḥmood Baghdadi (رَحْمَةُ اللهِ عَلَيْهِ), Ibn Katheer (رَحْمَةُ اللهِ عَلَيْهِ) and other Mufasssireen (commentators of the Qur'aan Shareef), or Hafez Asqalani (رَحْمَةُ اللهِ عَلَيْهِ), Mulla Ali Qaari (رَحْمَةُ اللهِ عَلَيْهِ) and other Muhadditheen⁷² writing volumes in commentary. Therefore, to just read and present an Ayah from the Qur'aan Shareef or a Hadeeth from a kitaab is not sufficient to justify one's actions.

Despite the fact that there are so many law books and medical journals at the disposal of the layman, not everyone is qualified to understand or explain and interpret these. One has to spend

⁷¹ *kitaabs* : books

⁷² *Muhadditheen* : Scholars of Hadith

many years in study and research under one already qualified in the field of law, medicine, etc. before one can do so. ...If some quack has to give a wrong opinion or an incorrect diagnosis, he would be sued for malpractice.

So in the field of *Ifta*⁷³, only those qualified in the science of Qur`aan and Hadeeth may issue verdicts. No matter how many certificates, degrees and other qualifications and titles a person may have acquired in the secular field, these do not then give him (or her) the license and authority to issue Fatwas (rulings) in the sphere of religion.

...Then there are so many who have a superficial knowledge of just the Arabic language but consider themselves qualified to interpret the Qur`aan Shareef and Ahaadeeth.

The Sahaba-e-Kiraam (رَضِيَ اللهُ عَنْهُمْ), who were perfectly acquainted and versant in the language of Arabic, were still required to formally learn the Qur`aan Shareef from Rasulullah (صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ). It would therefore be false and arrogant of a person, with a basic study of Arabic, to lay claim to having more knowledge and understanding than the noble Sahabah (رَضِيَ اللهُ عَنْهُمْ), by presenting his own commentary of the Qur`aan.

There are so many who have not studied Shariah under the guidance of Ulama-e-Haq, who reject the teachings of the Mujtahideen⁷⁴ and present their own concocted theories and commentaries; others are quick to quote Ayaah and Ahaadeeth in support of their sinful actions, or misinterpret the same. Such

⁷³ *Ifta* : Legal Shar'i injunctions

⁷⁴ *Mujtahideen* : Scholars certified as capable to interpret Islamic Law

people should seriously heed the warnings of Rasulullah (ﷺ) in regard to their careless and erroneous statements and ignorant behaviour.

Rasulullah (ﷺ) said : **“Whosoever, in interpreting the Qur`aan, says therein anything of his own opinion commits a mistake even if he is correct.”**⁷⁵

In another narration, Rasulullah (ﷺ) mentioned : **“Whoso interprets the Qur`aan without knowledge, let him seek his abode in the Fire.”**⁷⁶

And: **“Whoso interprets the Qur`aan according to his opinion, let him seek his abode in the Fire.”**⁷⁷

In regard to misquoting Ahaadeeth, Rasulullah (ﷺ) stated explicitly : **“Be careful of (narrating) traditions from me except what you know. Whoso imputes falsehood to me intentionally, let him then seek his abode in the fire.”**⁷⁸

Yes, when it comes to etiquette, character, the stories of the Ambiyaa (عليهم السلام) and nations of the past, the causes of rise and decline; paradise and hell, reward and retribution, then read and quote *authentic* Tafseer or translation; **but when it comes to the laws of Shariah, Fatawa (Islamic rulings), commentary of Qur`aan and Hadeeth, leave it to those who have spent years mastering these sciences and are experts in these fields.**

⁷⁵ Abu Dawood

⁷⁶ Tirmidhi

⁷⁷ Tirmidhi

⁷⁸ Tirmidhi

Nowadays, the title of ‘*Mufti*’⁷⁹ has also become very cheap. Some spend a few months or a year in a Darul Ifta⁸⁰ and become rubber stamp “*Mufti so and so*”. **Before enquiring about matters pertaining to Deen, verify the person’s qualifications, just as we do in worldly matters.**

...Women have a weakness, that if a woman gives a powerful speech on a subject, having read some Islamic books, she is asked questions on all subjects. The speaker too, will sometimes reply to all questions, even though unaware or ignorant.

Just giving a good speech is no qualification to answer all questions on the Qur’aan Shareef and Sunnah of Rasulullah (ﷺ).

We should be cautious and selective regarding whom we acquire Ilm-e-Deen⁸¹ from. ...There is a famous statement of Muhammad bin Sireen (رحمته الله عليه): **“This knowledge is a matter of Deen, so be careful who you take your Deen from.”**

We should keep these points in mind and we should also not lay claim to qualifications we do not possess.

⁷⁹ *Mufti* : Muslim Jurist

⁸⁰ *Darul Ifta* : Institution offering a course concentrating on Islamic Law and passing verdicts

⁸¹ *Ilm-e-Deen* : knowledge of religion

The Airport

At the Johannesburg International Airport⁸², whilst in transit, some brothers requested that I give them some Nasihah (advice) before departure.

I mentioned the following: ‘The Airport itself presents sufficient Ibrat (lesson) for a person’s Islaah (reformation).

Boards are seen, computer screens inform, and announcements are repeatedly heard of **ARRIVALS** and **DEPARTURES**. We should take lesson from this.

We have ‘*arrived*’. Our scheduled **arrival** to the destination of this world has come to pass. We have journeyed from Aalame-Arwah⁸³ to this transitory world. Our next journey is to ‘Aalame-Barzakh’⁸⁴.

In this material world, the time of departure is given for the flights that are leaving for various cities and countries. A person can make preparations for travel, accordingly. As is common experience though, flights are generally delayed.

Our departure to the Akhirah (Hereafter) is scheduled, but absolutely unknown to us. Moreover, there will be no delay in departure and no cancellation.

⁸² Now known as OR TAMBO International

⁸³ *Aalame-Arwah* : The World of Souls

⁸⁴ *Aalame-Barzakh* : The period of life after death until the Resurrection

حَتَّىٰ إِذَا جَاءَ أَحَدَكُمُ الْمَوْتُ تَوَفَّتْهُ رُسُلُنَا وَهُمْ لَا يُفَرِّطُونَ ۝

**“... AT LENGTH WHEN DEATH APPROACHES ONE OF YOU, OUR ANGELS
TAKE HIS SOUL AND THEY NEVER FAIL IN THEIR DUTY.”**

[SURAH AN`AAM : 6 : 61]

In a couplet that deeply impresses upon the reality of this life, my Shaykh, Hazrat Maulana Hakeem Muhammad Akhtar Saheb (Daamat Barakaatuhum), states:

***Strange is the visa of life;
It can be cancelled at any time.
The duration of its validity is unknown,
And its extension too, impossible.***

Therefore, we need to be ever ready for the journey to the Hereafter.

Passengers are either seated in the VIP lounge or in the ordinary waiting area. Whether the person intends traveling ‘First Class’, ‘Business Class’ or ‘Economy Class’; **all will depart.** Each one has a boarding pass in hand. It is just a matter of time before departure.

The Azaan⁸⁵ in our right ear, and the Iqaamah⁸⁶ in our left ear, were already given at the time of our birth. All that is left is the Janaza Salaah⁸⁷ at the time of our death. Just as the time between the Iqaamah and Salaah is negligible – so too is the time span of our lives.

⁸⁵ *Azaan* : The call to prayer

⁸⁶ *Iqaamah*: The announcement of the commencement of the obligatory prayer

⁸⁷ *Janaza (Salaah)* : The funeral prayer

As someone has aptly mentioned : Our life is just like the **‘dash’** between the date of birth and the date of passing away, which is inscribed on many tombstones. Though this ‘dash’ of life is so short, it is such a significant stage in our journey, that it either **‘makes’** or **‘breaks’** our Hereafter. This little dash either delivers a person to Jannah or Jahannum. So before someone mentions the date of our departure, we should convert the ‘dash’ of life to time spent securing provisions for the coming journey.

Then I mentioned that now two new boards are to be found :

UNDERGROUND PARKING

and

PRAYER ROOM UPSTAIRS

Our **‘parking’** too is reserved. ...What then should we do? Before **‘departure’** and before being **‘parked’** under the ground, we should visit the **‘prayer room’** – meaning, that we should bring the submission and servitude found in prayer or Salaah, into our lives. Submit to the One who gave us this life because very soon will we be returning to Him.

وَإِلَى اللَّهِ الْمَصِيرُ ۝

“... AND THE DESTINATION (OF ALL) IS TO ALLAH.”

[SURAH AHZAAB 35 : 18]

In addition, this world is very much like a time-share. The occupants make full use of all facilities during that week or

month – the lounge, fridge, stove, furniture, air conditioner and the luxuries of the timeshare. However, they know that they will have to move out as soon as their time expires.

Similarly, we should make use of the bounties of Allah Ta’ala in this world but we should not give our hearts to this world. ...How can we give our hearts to a world which is so unfaithful? ...The home in which there is excitement and celebration of a wedding is suddenly plunged into grief, sorrow and mourning.

We should keep before us the Hadeeth of Rasulullah (ﷺ): ***‘Verily, the world has been created for you and you have been created for the Aakhirah.***⁸⁸

Preparation for the Aakhirah (Hereafter) does not mean that we will be deprived of the good things of this world. Eat, drink, marry, conduct business and do all other activities according to the teachings of Shariah and the Sunnah of Rasulullah (ﷺ). This is all that is required.

May Allah Ta’ala grant us all, death on Imaan, at a time when He is most pleased with us.

تَوَفَّيْ مُسْلِمًا وَأَنْجِفْنِي بِالصَّالِحِينَ ۝

“... (O MY LORD) TAKE YOU MY SOUL (AT DEATH) AS ONE SUBMITTING TO YOUR WILL (AS A MUSLIM), AND UNITE ME WITH THE RIGHTEOUS.”

[SURAH YUSUF 12 : 101]

⁸⁸ Shu’abul Imaan

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

1

SUCCESS AND FAILURE

GENERALLY, PEOPLE ASPIRE FOR SUCCESS. They want to be successful in life and they work hard to achieve success. No one wants to be a failure in life. However, the true success is the success of the Akhirah (hereafter) and the real failure is the failure of the test of this worldly life. The condition of the spiritual heart and soul defines and determines this success or failure. Allah Ta'ala informs us in the Qur'aan Shareef:

فَدَأْفَلَحَ مَنْ زَكَّاهَا ۖ وَ قَدْ خَابَ مَنْ دَسَّاهَا ۖ

**“SUCCESS IS REALLY ATTAINED BY HIM WHO PURIFIES IT (HIS SOUL),
AND FAILURE IS REALLY SUFFERED BY HIM WHO POLLUTES IT.”**

[SURAH ASH-SHAMS 91 : 9 /10]

Unfortunately, the majority do not see any need for Islaah (reformation) of the nafs (ego) and Tazkiyah (purification) of the heart. The effort on the heart and soul is usually ignored – as if it is superfluous and unnecessary. Yet, it is extremely important.

Our understanding of success and failure is based on a person's worldly and material status, whereas Allah Ta'ala gives no consideration to worldly and material status, because His criterion is Taqwa.

إِنَّ أَكْرَمَكُمْ عِنْدَ اللَّهِ أَتْقَاكُمْ ط

“SURELY THE NOBLEST OF YOU IN THE SIGHT OF ALLAH, IS THE ONE WHO IS MOST PIOUS OF YOU...”

[SURAH AL-HUJURAAT 49 : 13]

Allah Ta’ala’s Gaze is on our hearts.

Rasulullah ﷺ said: **“Verily Allah does not look towards your physical appearances or towards your riches; but He sees (the sincerity of) your hearts and (the nature of) your deeds.”³**

When the spiritual heart is neglected, it becomes corrupt, and this affects the entire body. Rasulullah ﷺ said: **“There is a piece of flesh in the body; if it becomes good (reformed), the whole body becomes good but if it gets corrupted, the whole body gets corrupted – and that is the heart.”⁴**

Then this corruption, which is in the heart, will be found in the eyes – the person will be casting lustful gazes, reading Haraam⁵, viewing Haraam, etc.; it will be found in the tongue – the person will be backbiting, swearing, lying and deceiving; it will be found in the hands – the person will be stealing and using his hands for other sins and injustices; it will be found in the ears – the person will be listening to music, gossip, etc.; it will be found in the feet – the person will be walking in the direction of the gambling dens, cinemas, rave clubs, prostitute quarters and other evil, filthy places. This corruption will be found in all of his actions.

³ Sahih Muslim

⁴ Sahih Al-Bukhari

⁵ Haraam: unlawful / forbidden according to Shari’ah

A corrupted heart makes the person a problem wherever he is. In his marriage, he is a disappointment and perhaps even a curse for his wife. In business, he is a problem for those who deal with him. If he is a Musalli at a Masjid, he is a headache for the Imaam; he is a headache for the Muazzin; he is a headache for the other Musallis who frequent the Masjid. If he goes for Hajj, he will be a problem on the plane, a problem in Mina and Arafaat. ...He will trouble and harass people everywhere. People will even say: *The sooner he departs from this world, the better.* ...Because there is corruption in the heart.

The purification of the heart is where effort is most required. The root cause of all the problems in society is due to the spiritual diseases of the heart: pride, arrogance, jealousy, malice, greed, evil desires and passions, love of the world and so forth.

When it comes to our physical health and well-being, there is so much of concern. Our spiritual life is, by far, more important than our physical well-being. Our salvation rests on our spiritual health. Far more attention needs to be given to the spiritual heart and to the soul.

Naturally, we should not neglect our physical health. Health is a bounty and trust from Allah Ta'ala, and we should take care of it. This is also an order of Allah Ta'ala. ...However, physical ailments are not a problem. If a person dies of a heart attack or some other sickness, then death is the end of that sickness. He will not have to endure the pain and difficulty of being physically sick thereafter. In contrast, if a person dies with spiritual sicknesses, then there will be problems in the grave and problems in the Aakhirah.

Our Shaykh, Hazrat Maulana Hakeem Muhammad Akhtar Saheb رَحْمَةُ اللهِ عَلَيْهِ had said in one of his poems, the meaning of which is:

When you are a little sick; when you are a little weak, then you listen to the advice of the doctor. You do not ask the doctor for proof in respect to his prescription. ... You have trust in his advice.

No matter how bitter the medication, you will take it, because you want to be cured and you want to restore your health.

You are very concerned when it comes to your physical body, which will one day decompose and turn to dust.

Where is the concern for your Deen? Your heart and soul, the 'body' of your Deen, is afflicted with cancer – the cancer of sins!

When it comes to the things of the world, your intelligence seems to have no limits. When it comes to your Deen, death seems to have overcome your intelligence!

...If a person is desperate for a diagnosis of his physical ailment and is anxious for a cure, he will not just self-medicate. Why? Because his life is dear to him; his health is extremely precious to him. He will find the time and money and go to a reputable doctor, get a correct diagnosis and the proper medication or treatment. He will readily accept and believe in the advice of the doctor or specialist. What about the advices, prescriptions and 'medication' given by Rasulullah صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ, for the health and well-being of our souls?

There is the possibility that doctors are inaccurate in their diagnosis. There are no such inaccuracies or mistakes in the teachings and guidance of Rasulullah صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ – because he did

not say anything of his own desire. Everything was an inspiration from Allah Ta'ala.

وَمَا يَنْطِقُ عَنِ الْهَوَىٰ ۖ إِنْ هُوَ إِلَّا وَحْيٌ يُوحَىٰ ۖ

**“NOR DOES HE SPEAK OF (HIS OWN) DESIRE. IT IS ONLY AN
INSPIRATION THAT IS INSPIRED.”**

[SURAH AN-NAJM 53 : 3/4]

It is the responsibility of each one of us to give attention to our spiritual reformation, to the purification of our hearts and souls, and to treat our spiritual sicknesses. ...A sound, healthy spiritual heart invites all kinds of blessings and true success, in this world and the next. Such a person becomes a means of goodness for others as well.

If we sincerely want to give up our sins but find it difficult, and we really want a cure for our spiritual sicknesses, then just as we require a reliable physician for our physical ailments; similarly, we require a spiritual doctor – i.e. a Shaykh-e-Kaamil⁶ – for our spiritual ailments. The Shaykh will diagnose and will administer the medication of the Love and Fear of Allah Ta'ala, which will then be the means of spiritual cure, recovery and betterment. This will require time, but no cost. Alhamdulillah, the doctors of the spiritual heart do not charge for their diagnosis and treatment. However, it is important and necessary to follow through with their advice and treatment.

The choice of the spiritual doctor or Shaykh has to be a careful one – especially considering these times where there are many bogus

⁶ Shaykh-e-Kaamil: An accomplished Spiritual guide

and money-making people in the guise of peers (spiritual guides). The Shaykh must be learned, pious, practical on Deen, and acknowledged by the people of learning – i.e. those on Haq (Truth), and he should be entrusted by a Shaykh-e-Kaamil to carry out Tazkiyah through Khilafah⁷.

When we can find time for our physical health and we also work so hard to keep the physical body fit and strong, we can and should definitely find time for our spiritual health and develop a strong soul. There is no excuse.

The meeting with Allah Ta'ala is inevitable. No one can avoid this meeting. Let it be a meeting where He is pleased to meet us and we are pleased to meet Him! Let us work towards meeting Allah Ta'ala with a clean heart and with a sound heart (Qalb-e-Saleem).

May Allah Ta'ala grant us the concern and the Taufeeq of implementing the teachings of Deen and Shari'ah⁸ in our lives, and of purifying our hearts and souls. May Allah Ta'ala grant us appreciation for the bounty of the the Suhbah (company) of the Mashaa'ikh, as well as grant us full benefit from their spiritual treatment and medication. May Allah Ta'ala grant us good spiritual health and the success of both worlds.

⁷ Khilafah: authorization given by a Shaykh to a Mureed (disciple), in the spiritual realm.

⁸ Shari'ah: Islamic Law

THE SPIRITUAL ‘DRIP’

IN A MAJLIS OF MY RESPECTED SHAYKH, Hazrat Maulana Hakeem Muhammad Akhtar Saheb رَحْمَةُ اللهِ عَلَيْهِ, Hazrat requested one of his Mureeds to recite a verse of poetry, which Hazrat رَحْمَةُ اللهِ عَلَيْهِ had composed. Each time the verse was recited, the person was told to read it again. This went on for one solid hour – that is, the repetition of the one verse; but the effect on the hearts was seen in the tears that were shed by those who were present.

The verse, translated, is:

**“If you hide and commit sins,
Someone is watching from above.”**

A person who is not acquainted with the aim and objective would say that listening to the same verse repeatedly, for an entire hour, would be boring, tiresome and uninspiring ... but not so for those who are sincerely seeking the Pleasure of Allah Ta’ala. The true Believer understands that anything good, repeated, benefits him.

وَذَكِّرْ فَإِنَّ الذِّكْرَ تَنْفَعُ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ ۝

“AND REMIND, FOR INDEED, THE REMINDER BENEFITS THE BELIEVER.”

[SURAH AZ-ZAARIYAAT 51 : 55]

An analogy came to mind when giving thought to the above incident: The repetition of that one verse of poetry and its benefit upon the hearts of all those who were present, was like a drip.

A person is admitted into hospital due to various reasons: dehydration, loss of blood, surgery, childbirth, an accident, etc. Many a time, there is a need for the use of a drip – an intravenous drip. ...The drip is called a drip because its work is to administer fluid slowly, drop-by-drop, directly into a vein. Thus, one drop at a time enters the person's system... until the drip is emptied. This process is a slow process, taking, sometimes, a number of hours – yet the drip is described as a very efficient process whereby the entire body receives the supply of medication that it requires.

There is a drip chamber that controls the process of the fluid flowing into the vein and it also prevents air entering the bloodstream. If air is introduced into the bloodstream, then this can lead to health complications, which could even be fatal.

If there is a need for a blood transfusion, the patient receives healthy blood through a drip. If the patient is dehydrated, then the drip is used to hydrate him with a solution of glucose and electrolytes because glucose boosts the energy system once it enters the blood stream. If there is some other ailment, then accordingly, the drip is used to supply the medication or nutrients needed.

No sane patient will complain that the process is too long... that he is becoming bored ...and that the drip should be removed because it is a tedious experience. The person knows his health is dependent on the drip.

If we have to look at our own condition, as Muslims... as an Ummah, we find that we have lost so much of spiritual blood, or we are spiritually, severely dehydrated. These sessions or Majaalis of the

Mashaa`ikh are like short term hospitalisation where we are attached to a ‘drip’ – the ‘drip’ being the Suhbah of the Mashaa`ikh, their advice, guidance and Duas, whereby we hydrate our Imaan which is withering away, or we regain the spiritual blood that we have lost due to our own negligence and involvement in sins.

The repetition of the Qur`aan Shareef, Ahādīth and the poetry of the Ahlullah⁹ are the medication or nutrients that are supplied to our souls, through these spiritual ‘drips’; which, in turn, keep us spiritually alive. If we do not take this recourse – of attaching ourselves to a spiritual ‘drip’ – that is, the company of a Shaykh-e-Kaamil – we can find ourselves in a critical and spiritually life-threatening condition. May Allah Ta’ala safeguard us.

These Majaalis of the Mashaa`ikh are to be appreciated – more especially in these times of Fitnah¹⁰, where immorality, sins and corruption have led to acute spiritual dehydration and great loss of spiritual blood. Our weakness is evident at every turn. It is necessary for all of us to make the effort to continuously supply our souls with the nourishment of Taqwa¹¹, via these spiritual drips. Allah Ta’ala instructs us to do so:

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا اتَّقُوا اللَّهَ وَكُونُوا مَعَ الصَّادِقِينَ ۝

“O YOU WHO BELIEVE, FEAR ALLAH AND JOIN THE COMPANY OF THE TRUTHFUL ONES (THE PIOUS, THE AULIYA ALLAH).”

[SURAH AT-TAUBAH 9 : 119]

⁹ Ahlullah: People of Allah (Ta’ala)

¹⁰ Fitnah: Trials (also implies corruptions, mischief, etc.)

¹¹ Taqwa: Piety / to abstain or restrain oneself from that which is forbidden.

Hazrat Maulana Maseehullah رَحْمَةُ اللَّهِ عَلَيْهِ had explained very beautifully, that this Ayah (verse) draws attention to: **Imaan, Taqwa and Suhbah**. Hazrat Maulana رَحْمَةُ اللَّهِ عَلَيْهِ said that for the nourishment, growth, health and preservation of Imaan, Taqwa is required. Without Taqwa, one's Imaan will weaken; will decline ... will wilt and wither away. However, for the nourishment, development, growth and progress of Taqwa, the company of the pious is indispensable. It is absolutely essential.

Allah Ta'ala commands us to keep the company of the 'Siddiqueen', the truthful ones – because they are truthful in their piety. They have the reality of piety.

...In regard to the drip, we are informed that if air is introduced into the bloodstream, this could lead to health complications, which can be fatal as well. Similarly, when a person keeps the company of the Shaykh and attends the Majaalis, but he entertains in his heart bad thoughts and criticism, or he is disrespectful, or in his efforts and good deeds, the person begins to suffer the infection of Ujub (vanity / conceit) or Kibr (pride), or the person becomes jealous of others and allows malice to breed in his heart, and he makes no effort to rectify and cure his spiritual ailments – then this is that poison which leads to spiritual deterioration and which can even lead to spiritual ruin, despite being in the right environment and in the right company.

May Allah Ta'ala grant us the company of His Friends and the full benefits of their companionship. May Allah Ta'ala bless us with strong Imaan and with Istiyaamah (steadfastness) on Deen.

3

CREATING A NICHE IN THE HEART

IT IS SAID THAT WE SHOULD CREATE A NICHE in the hearts of the Auliya Allah¹² – that is, create a special place in their hearts.

One is to say: *“Make Dua...”* – and the person will make Dua when he thinks of you. When we would request our Shaykh, Hazrat Maulana Hakeem Muhammad Akhtar Saheb رَحْمَةُ اللهِ عَلَيْهِ to make Dua, Hazrat رَحْمَةُ اللهِ عَلَيْهِ would immediately make Dua. Alhamdulillah. ...However, that person who makes Khidmat, then Dua comes out from the heart, without the person even asking. Now this is an extra special Dua. This is a Dua that should be sought.

Khidmat does not mean only serving the Shaykh by assisting him in various tasks and work. No doubt, this is a kind of Khidmat and the Ahlullah appreciate such Khidmat as well, because this is a world of means. However, the real Khidmat is for us to become a Sadaqah-e-Jaariyah for them.

How do we become Sadaqah-e-Jaariyah?

...By practising on their teachings.

If a person remains in the company of his Shaykh, all his life, but there is no improvement in his Salaah, no improvement in his fasting, no improvement in his character and in his speech – he still swears and curses, cheats and deceives; despite having one

¹² Auliya Allah: Friends of Allah Ta’ala

body, he has two faces, and his heart is a container of greed and pride, malice and miserliness, jealousy and mischief, etc. ...then will this person become Sadaqah-e-Jaariyah for the Shaykh? What kind of Sadaqah-e-Jaariyah will he be?!

On the other hand, another person came through a 'rough' life – as they describe it. He was caught up in various sins. ...There are many who were living a reckless or heedless kind of life, but then they keep the Suhbah of the Shaykh, and they progress with great speed – like the speed of light, or faster than that. So although the person came from a rough life, his speed is fast – in respect to his reformation and change. Now this person will be a Sadaqah-e-Jaariyah. This is what the Mashaa'ikh greatly appreciate: Seeing their teachings being brought into practice and seeing positive changes and improvements being made.

If a person is blessed with both: There is Ittiba¹³ of the Shaykh and the person's A'maal (actions) are improving and increasing, and there is also Khidmat, then the Muhabbat increases even more. The person wins the heart of the Shaykh. A niche is created in the heart, and due to this Muhabbat, the Shaykh makes deep-hearted Dua for the person.

Sometimes the Shaykh has thousands of Mureeds. He will not be able to remember the names of all his Mureeds and may not even know who some are. In one big gathering, there may be one hundred people, two hundred people, five hundred people, who became Bay'ah¹⁴. Many will not be known by name.

¹³ Ittiba : to follow / following / obedience

¹⁴ Bay'ah : Pledge of allegiance

...When a Mureed is rendering some Khidmat, the Mureed must not entertain the thought: *I'm doing a great favour to the Shaykh*. There must be Ikhlāas (sincerity) in the Khidmat, appreciation for the opportunity to serve, as well as Tawaadhu (humility). If there is Ikhlāas and Tawaadhu, there will be a lot of Barakah and benefit in that Bay'at.

As said, the greatest Khidmat is to go through the process of Islaah sincerely – rectifying one's character, correcting one's relationship with Allah Ta'ala and with the creation, and improving in good deeds. This is the Khidmat that is valued very much. What happiness is there, if there are large crowds but no one is changing his life?

We are living in times of corruption and there are so many bogus peers and even bogus Mureeds. Peers have become bogus and the Mureeds have become bogus too. So caution must be exercised. ...Those who are fraudulent and bogus are happy with large numbers following them, and are happy so long as you pay their subscription fees and you shower them with material gifts.

Those Mashaa'ikh, who are on Haq, have Istighnaa¹⁵ and Qana'at¹⁶. Their gaze is not on Makhlooq and not on what the creation will do for them. ...A Shaykh must not have his gaze on the pockets of anyone. His gaze must be fully focused on Allah Ta'ala – that Allah Ta'ala is the Provider and there is no shortage in the treasures of Allah Ta'ala. The true Mashaa'ikh are concerned about connecting us with Allah Ta'ala and His Nabi ﷺ and will be happy when their Mureeds bring changes

¹⁵ Istighnaa : independence

¹⁶ Qana'at : contentment

into their lives and progress in their characters. This is the area that is most neglected and even if we talk for the whole year on Akhlāq (character), then it is worthy of being discussed.

You will notice in our talks that we usually come back to Akhlāq. This is what will build Muḥabbat. If there is no Akhlāq, then as I have already mentioned many, many times, the person who is your friend will become your enemy. If there is Akhlāq, then the enemy also will become your friend.

If there is Akhlāq, then the wife will become loving and caring. If there is no Akhlāq, then the wife will distance herself from the husband. She will want out of the marriage. Some wives write about their husbands, that they do not want to have their husbands in Jannah¹⁷ also, because it is so burdensome living with them here in this world. ...What kind of life is that? ...The reason for this wish is that some do not understand that Jannah will not be like the Dunya and that every Jannati will have beautiful character.

Sometimes the children say: *"We don't like our parents."* or the parents say: *"We don't like our children."* ...This is what happens when there is deficiency in Akhlāq, from either side or both sides. There will be problems. **...If we create magnanimity in our hearts; if we have big hearts, then we can win over our own families.**

We cannot share wealth with everybody. How much of wealth can a person share and that too, with everyone? Even if a king has to

¹⁷ Jannah : Heaven

say: *'I will distribute my wealth to every person in the world,'* his treasuries will become empty.

Wealth can be shared with a certain number of people: with one's parents, wife, children and some of the poor, needy and destitute; but not with every single person in the world. **On the other hand, the wealth of Akhlaaq is something that can be shared continuously and there will be no decrease in this wealth.** ...So this is the effort that needs to be made: to practise fully on Deen and develop Akhlaaq-e-Hameedah¹⁸.

May Allah Ta'ala grant us the understanding, the concern and the reality of all that is being conveyed and the Taufeeq to work on correcting and improving our characters and our deeds.

¹⁸ Akhlaaq-e-Hameedah: Praiseworthy character

4

ANAA'NIYYAT AND FANAA'IYYAT

THERE ARE TWO OPPOSING CONDITIONS which are found in people. These are: Anaa'niyyat and Fanaa'iyyat.

Anaa'niyyat means that everything is about “me”, or about: “I, me and myself.” At all times, life revolves around me and myself. That's all. ...The person puts himself first, gives preference to himself and believes that he is important. The person wants to be recognised wherever he goes – that he is somebody. If he is not recognised, he is offended. If he goes to some Majlis and people do not shake his hand and acknowledge his presence, he is upset. The thinking is: *I am such a great person and people are not showing any kind of interest.*

When a person harbours, in his heart, this conceit and this sense of self-importance, and the inner desire is to be recognised and to be known, then this indicates that the person is in the firm grip of his nafs. When there is Anaa'niyyat, Allah Ta'ala destroys. ...When the sheep is alive, it bleats: '*Meh meh meh*'. This is the sheep that comes under the knife for slaughter. When the nafs is alive, and everything is '*ana, ana, ana*' (I, I, I), then that person comes under the punishment of Allah Ta'ala and is humbled; is destroyed.

...One girl had a proposal from someone. I am not mentioning any name and no one knows who I am talking about. In her e-mail, she mentioned her level of Taqwa. She said: *“I have a high level of Taqwa. There is someone who is proposing marriage. However, I*

do not want his level of Taqwa to be less than mine. He must be able to increase my level of Taqwa.”

Part of the reply that was given was: *“I have to caution you with regard to your claim of your Taqwa being of a high level. This is extremely dangerous. ...All those who are of a high level of Taqwa consider themselves to be insignificant; they consider themselves to be the most sinful ones on earth. Allah Ta’ala then places in the hearts of people, Husne Zann (good opinion) and Thana (praise) – that the person is a person of Taqwa. Those who have Taqwa do not make loud and bold claims, because they have annihilated themselves.”*

They have made Fanaa¹⁹ of their nafs. On that Fanaa, Allah Ta’ala gives them ‘Baqaa’²⁰. Allah Ta’ala keeps their names, their works, their Bayanaat (talks), their Uloom (knowledge) and their Nasihah (advice) alive. When a person annihilates himself, then there is no ‘I, me and myself’. As for the one who is always chasing after name, fame and prominence, then Allah Ta’ala makes “Fanaa” of the person. Allah Ta’ala destroys. ...This “Fanaa” and destruction has a different meaning to Fanaa of the nafs.

Time and again, people phone, write or e-mail, seeking advice regarding their problems. Some say: *‘I am so pious, I am doing everything right, but I have this problem... this difficulty... this setback.’* Allah Ta’ala dislikes and disapproves that a servant makes a claim and testifies to his or her own purity and piety. Allah Ta’ala says:

¹⁹ Fanaa: annihilation (of the ego)

²⁰ Baqaa: high spiritual station indicating permanence in the state of annihilation (Fanaa).

فَلَا تُزَكُّوا أَنْفُسَكُمْ ۖ هُوَ أَعْلَمُ بِمَنِ اتَّقَى ۝

**“... SO DO NOT CLAIM PURITY FOR YOURSELVES. HE KNOWS BEST WHO IS
GOD-FEARING.”**

[SURAH AN-NAJM 53 : 32]

It is most definitely Allah Ta’ala’s Grace, Mercy and Kindness upon any person, if the person progresses in this path of Islaah and Tazkiyah:

وَلَوْلَا فَضْلُ اللَّهِ عَلَيْكُمْ وَرَحْمَتُهُ مَا زَكَا مِنْكُمْ مِنْ أَحَدٍ أَبَدًا وَلَكِنَّ اللَّهَ يُزَكِّي مَنْ يَشَاءُ ۖ
وَاللَّهُ سَمِيعٌ عَلِيمٌ ۝

**“... HAD IT NOT BEEN FOR THE GRACE OF ALLAH UPON YOU, AND HIS MERCY,
NOT A SINGLE PERSON FROM YOU WOULD HAVE EVER ATTAINED PURITY.
BUT ALLAH PURIFIES WHOMSOEVER HE WILLS. ALLAH IS ALL-HEARING,
ALL-KNOWING.”**

[SURAH AN-NOOR 24 : 21]

The Mashaa’ikh used to train their Mureeds in many different ways. Hazrat Maulana Rashid Ahmad Gangohi رَحْمَةُ اللَّهِ عَلَيْهِ was a Mureed of Hazrat Haaji Imdadullah رَحْمَةُ اللَّهِ عَلَيْهِ and in that relationship, he became very close to his Shaykh. Consider the training that he received:

He was seated at the Dastarkhan²¹ with his Shaykh. When the food came from Hazrat Haaji Saheb’s home, one bowl contained very delicious kofta (kabaab) and one bowl contained a simple type of gravy. Hazrat Haaji Saheb رَحْمَةُ اللَّهِ عَلَيْهِ kept the kabaab aside and gave

²¹ Dastarkhan: floor mat for eating

Hazrat Maulana Gangohi رَحْمَةُ اللهِ عَلَيْهِ, the simple gravy. While they were eating, Hazrat Zaamin Shaheed رَحْمَةُ اللهِ عَلَيْهِ walked in. On seeing them eating, he addressed Hazrat Haaji Saheb رَحْمَةُ اللهِ عَلَيْهِ and said: *“Why do you not pass the kofta also to Rashid Ahmad?”*

Hazrat Haaji Saheb رَحْمَةُ اللهِ عَلَيْهِ replied, **with the object of testing his Mureed:** *“He (Maulana Gangohi) should be grateful that I am allowing him to even eat with me. In fact, I had intended to give him a piece of bread in his hand and for him to eat elsewhere!”*

As he said that, he also watched the reaction of Maulana Gangohi رَحْمَةُ اللهِ عَلَيْهِ. Hazrat Maulana Rashid Ahmad Gangohi رَحْمَةُ اللهِ عَلَيْهِ did not take any offence on that statement and his facial expression also did not change in any way. He, himself, said: *“Alhamdulillah! There was no effect on my heart. I accepted that whatever Haaji Saheb had said, was the truth. In fact, to get a piece of bread from him was a great favour, regardless of the way it was obtained.”*

When someone is a little upset, it is easy to make out that he is upset. Another person would have said that he is being humiliated and disgraced and put to shame. But those were the type of tests they went through in the past. Nowadays, a Mureed will say: *‘What does this Shaykh think of himself?! Does he think I can’t have good food at home?!’* ...The person will leave. He will go home; perhaps even end that relationship.

Most Mureeds, in our time, do not have that same capacity or appreciation. So the present day Mashaa’ikh, understanding the nature of people, adopt a somewhat lenient approach. Of course, there will be correction and discipline. The right of the Mureed

over the Shaykh is that the Shaykh makes Islaah. However, the Mashaa'ikh understand that the nature of the people is not the same.

The objective is the reformation of the Mureed. Some, who are inexperienced, constantly reproach and admonish their Mureeds or students. They just reprimand and reprimand. This indicates that there is no correct understanding and no skill of how to make Islaah. Each person is different. Each person's temperament is different. And the Shaykh has to understand the temperament of each Mureed. There are some who will take a harsh reprimand but others may just disappear altogether – and then they will lose out on the benefits of Suhbah and Ta'leem²².

The Shaykh and the Ustaadh also need to check why they are reprimanding. Is it motivated by nafs or is it a sincere concern for the Mureed to progress in this path, or the student to excel in his studies? ...These are aspects of Sulook²³ that we need to learn.

Once the Azmat (greatness) of Allah Ta'ala enters the heart, the person will not think anything of himself. Rasulullah ﷺ taught us the Dua:

اللَّهُمَّ اجْعَلْنِي فِي عَيْنِي صَغِيرًا وَفِي عَيْنِ النَّاسِ كَبِيرًا

“O Allah, make me small (insignificant) in my own eyes, and make me great (significant) in the eyes of the people.”

²² Ta'leem: Teaching (of Deen)

²³ Sulook: The path towards Allah Ta'ala

In this beautiful Dua we are asking Allah Ta'ala, that in our hearts, we should think of ourselves as very small, as insignificant, as nobody, and we also ask that Allah Ta'ala places respect and honour in the hearts of people for us.

If people are not going to have respect in their hearts, who will listen? If a person is drug addict or alcoholic, or he is known as a womaniser, or is a gambler, or is involved in other major sins *openly and flagrantly*, and if the person is told to sit on the Mimbar²⁴ and give a Bayaan, will people listen to his Bayaan, with respect? Will people encourage their children to keep the person's company, like how we encourage towards the company of the pious and righteous? No. ...Why? ...Because there is no regard in the sight of the people and no respect in the hearts of the people. Undoubtedly, if the person sincerely repents, gives up his sins and changes his life, then Allah Ta'ala, who is the Controller of hearts, changes the opinion of the people. Allah Ta'ala then places in the hearts of the people, respect, honour and high regard, because the person is now beloved to Allah Ta'ala.

Whilst we ask Allah Ta'ala to give us respect, we must not think of ourselves as people of worth and esteem. There must be Fanaa'iyat. However, this is a process. Fanaa'iyat is not just saying: "*I'm nothing!*" Words are very easy to utter, but the reality is something else. The reality requires Islaah, Tazkiyah and Mujahadah²⁵.

My Shaykh, Hazrat Maulana Hakeem Muhammad Akhtar Saheb رَحْمَةُ اللهِ عَلَيْهِ had said that sometimes a person tries to project an image of

²⁴ Mimbar: A pulpit in a Masjid from which sermons are delivered.

²⁵ Mujahadah: Striving

humility and self-effacement; he wants to be known as a very pious and humble person. So he will say: *"I'm nothing. I'm absolutely nothing!"* ...But if a person agrees with him and says: *"Yes, you are nothing!"* then his colour changes and he becomes offended and angry. Why? ...Because there is no Haqeeqat; no reality.

This Fanaa'iyat is achieved when the connection with one's Shaykh is sincere, and the Mureed plays his part as a Mureed should, by informing the Shaykh of his spiritual ailments, accepting and following through with the guidance, direction, spiritual treatment and prescriptions of the Shaykh. All of this requires humility and surrender, but how many are prepared to humble themselves? Yet, it is in humbling ourselves, undertaking this process of Islaah and bringing this reality within us, that Allah Ta'ala grants Baqaa. ...It is mentioned in a Hadīth: **"Whoever humbles himself for the sake of Allah, Allah elevates him."**²⁶ Of course, we should not do, seeking elevation. We should do for the sake of Allah Ta'ala alone. This is Ikhlāas.

May Allah Ta'ala grant us complete and correct understanding, and the Taufeeq of reforming ourselves. May Allah Ta'ala grant us the qualities of Istighnaa, Qana'at, Tawakkul (Trust) and Yaqeen (Conviction) in Him.

²⁶ Al Mu'jamul Awsat Lit Tabarani 8307

5

AVOID FUTILE ARGUMENTS

IT SEEMS AS IF EVERYONE has something to argue about these days. Arguing is a waste of precious time and a diversion of shaytaan, to impede the carrying out of good deeds or of rendering services to Deen.

We do not have to worry about arguing with every other person. We have got no time to argue with people. Only that person will go around arguing with people who has got the time. He has got the time to waste, so he goes around arguing. ...One person went to the barber and said: *"I have got black and white hair. So just take out all the white hair."* The barber shaved off all of the man's hair, placed it in front of him and said: *"Now you can pick out all the white strands. I do not have the time for that."*

The person whose heart is connected with Allah Ta'ala does not have the time for arguments, for fights, for unnecessary quarrels and for wasting time over useless, futile activities.

"That person, whose eye is on where the orders are coming, will not waste his time going and fighting with everybody!"

One person wrote a lengthy letter to me. He mentioned, amongst other things: *"Maulana, you and all your blind followers who attend your programmes..."* – have got this weakness, this weakness, this weakness.

I replied: *“JazakAllah for informing us of some of our weaknesses. I make Shukr that Allah Ta’ala concealed many other weaknesses. However, do inform me when you notice more of our shortcomings and failings, and make Dua that Allah Ta’ala gives us Hidayat.”*

That’s all. ...What am I going to start arguing about?

Futile arguing creates restlessness and darkness in the heart. It opens the door to misguidance. It leads a person away from Siratul Mustaqeem (the straight path). Rasulallah ﷺ cautioned us: **“No people will go astray after having being guided except that they become argumentative.”**²⁷

Rasulallah ﷺ also said: **“I guarantee a house in the outskirts of Paradise to the one who gives up arguing even if he were on the right side.”**²⁸

If we keep before us these Ahādīth and have Yaqeen (conviction) on the words of Rasulallah ﷺ as well as the consequences of our actions and the rewards of the Akhirah, many arguments would not even surface. The Saalik – the one seeking Allah Ta’ala – avoids futile arguments and does not waste time over petty matters. The focus and effort should be towards the most noble and lofty objective: Earning the Pleasure of Allah Ta’ala.

...There will always be jealousy; there will always be malice. There will always be enemies; there will be those who just cannot see or stomach the progress of certain people and who will want to create unnecessary trouble and mischief to hinder the person’s

²⁷ Tirmidhi

progress. They will resort to all kinds of mischief. This will happen. It happened in the time of Rasulullah ﷺ and will continue. So we should be careful not to get caught up with these types of issues. Those, who carry in their hearts spite and resentment, jealousy and malice; and they move about, creating mischief, instigating arguments, creating suspicion in hearts, etc., harm themselves the most.

Rasulullah ﷺ had to contend with much more than we do. Allah Ta'ala prescribed that Sabr (patience) should be adopted.

وَاصْبِرْ عَلَىٰ مَا يَقُولُونَ وَاهْجُرْهُمْ هَجْرًا جَمِيلًا ۝

“AND BEAR PATIENTLY WHAT THEY (THE OPPONENTS) SAY, AND PART WITH THEM IN A BEAUTIFUL MANNER.”

[SURAH MUZZAMMIL 73 : 10]

In the Tafseer (commentary) of this Ayah, the Mufasssireen have explained that the words, ‘Hajrann Jameel’ directs us to politely keep aloof of those who cause distress, not to complain to others of their hurtful and troublesome behaviour, nor become physically abusive or engage in any arguments, nor entertain revenge and requite evil with evil.

In different Aayaat, the qualities that Allah Ta'ala prefers from His servants are highlighted – patience, forgiveness, kindness, requiting evil with good, etc. These are qualities which are a means of turning the heart of even an enemy, and of course, Allah Ta'ala grants great rewards:

²⁸ Abu Dawood

وَلَا تَسْتَوِ الْحَسَنَةُ وَلَا السَّيِّئَةُ ۚ ادْفَعْ بِالَّتِي هِيَ أَحْسَنُ فَإِذَا الَّذِي بَيْنَكَ وَبَيْنَهُ
عَدَاوَةٌ كَأَنَّهُ وَلِيٌّ حَمِيمٌ ۝

وَمَا يُلْقِهَا إِلَّا الَّذِينَ صَبَرُوا ۖ وَمَا يُلْقِهَا إِلَّا ذُو حُظٍّ عَظِيمٍ ۝

“GOOD AND EVIL ARE NOT EQUAL. REPEL (EVIL) WITH WHAT IS BEST (TO BE PATIENT, FORGIVE, ETC.), AND YOU WILL SEE THAT THE ONE YOU HAD MUTUAL ENMITY WITH WILL BECOME AS IF HE WERE A CLOSE FRIEND.

AND NO ONE IS BLESSED WITH THIS (ATTITUDE) BUT THOSE WHO OBSERVE PATIENCE, AND NO ONE IS BLESSED WITH THIS (ATTITUDE) EXCEPT ONE HAVING A GREAT FORTUNE.”

[SURAH FUSSILAAT 41: 34]

وَلَمَنْ صَبَرَ وَغَفَرَ إِنَّ ذَلِكَ لَمِنْ عَزْمِ الْأُمُورِ ۝

“AND IF ONE OBSERVES PATIENCE AND FORGIVES, IT IS, OF COURSE, ONE OF THE COURAGEOUS CONDUCTS.”

[SURAH ASH-SHUURA 42 : 43]

May Allah Ta’ala bless us with the noble qualities of patience, tolerance, forbearance and calm, with the beautiful and noble character and conduct of Rasulullah ﷺ .

6

BUSINESS AND SALAAH

ONE PERSON ASKED ME: *“I am in my business from the morning, and from the business I proceed to the Masjid for Zuhr, then Asr and then Maghrib. I join the Salaah with ‘Allahu Akbar’, but thereafter it seems as if the whole business comes into my Salaah. How do I get concentration?”*

I replied: *“At least your complaint is about your business which is consuming your thoughts while in Salaah. Others complain of their Salaah being polluted with television, pornography, sport, video games, etc. They too hear the Azaan and they also enter into Salaah, but their complaint is that obscene and dirty images comes before them in their Sajdahs!”* ... نَعُوْذُ بِاللّٰهِ مِنْ ذَلِكَ²⁹

People have written to me, at a loss, because they are distracted by Haraam filthy pictures, which come to their minds, when in Sajdah (prostration)... that Sajdah where we are supposed to be closest to Allah Ta’ala. Rasulullah ﷺ said: **“A person in Sajdah is nearest unto Allah.”**³⁰

I then explained: When it comes to Salaah, we should not wait for the Azaan to be called and then proceed to the Masjid. If a person has no excuse, he should be in the Masjid by the time the Azaan has ended, preferably having completed his Wudhu. Respond to

²⁹ نَعُوْذُ بِاللّٰهِ مِنْ ذَلِكَ Na-oozu Billahi min zaalik: We seek Allah’s protection from that.

³⁰ Sahih Muslim

the Azaan and make Du'aa, since this is a time of the acceptance of Du'aa. Thereafter, the Sunnah Salaah should be read. ...It is unfortunate that Salaah has become a race and we complete four Rakaats in one minute flat. We want to show speed in Salaah, since we cannot show speed in any marathon or race.

Allah Ta'ala's Ihsaan (Favour) is all-embracing. He granted us the Sunnah Salaah before the Fardh Salaah. Through the Sunnah Salaah, we also build up our attention and focus for the Fardh Salaah. It is only Maghrib that we read immediately after the Azaan.

If carried out as is Sunnah, the four Rakaats Sunnah will take about five minutes. After the Sunnah Salaah, there will still be a few minutes left before the Jamaat Salaah commences. During those minutes, engage in Istighfaar³¹ and Taubah³², think of Aakhirah, accountability and presentation of one's deeds on the Day of Qiyamah. Reflect over one's life. Think: *What if my death has to come now?* ...In this manner, a person cuts off from business and from worldly thoughts as much as possible.

Now the Fardh Salaah commences, by which time 80% of the heart will be in that Salaah, Insha-Allah. If the person continues in his efforts, he will experience 'Mi'raj'³³ in his Salaah. Alhamdulillah, many, having followed through with this advice, have found a world of difference in their Salaah.

³¹ Istighfaar: Seeking forgiveness

³² Taubah : Repentance

³³ Salaah has been described as 'Mi'rajul Mu'mineen' (the ascension of the Believers).

THE SAHABA-E-KIRAAM رَضِيَ اللهُ عَنْهُمْ

How were the Sahaba-e-Kiraam رَضِيَ اللهُ عَنْهُمْ able to maintain their Khushoo³⁴ when they entered into Salaah? Why is it that they were not disturbed by worldly thoughts – like how we are plagued with worldly thoughts?

They too came into Salaah from the business world, yet proceeded directly into the Mi'raj of Salaah. From the time they commenced preparation for their Salaah, making Wudhu, etc. the Kaifiyyat³⁵ was different. It was very unlike our condition: We are talking, joking and laughing, and we enter the Masjid in this casual and carefree manner. Very sadly, many will deliberately delay and wait until they hear the Takbeer-e-Ula to come into the Masjid and join the Salaah. On the other hand, the Sahaba-e-Kiraam رَضِيَ اللهُ عَنْهُمْ truly understood and believed that they were going to stand before Allah Ta'ala, as will be on the Day of Qiyamah.

So why was it that their Salaah was not affected, and they were not diverted or distracted by what they were occupied with, until then? They too were in business and trade; they too were in agriculture and other avenues of earning a living. They were also selling different items, selling animals, planting crops, moving into foreign lands and engaging in big business.

Allah Ta'ala says in Surah An-Noor:

³⁴ Khushoo: concentration with full devotion

³⁵ Kaifiyyat: feeling

رَجَالٌ لَا تُلْهِهِمْ تِجَارَةٌ وَلَا بَيْعٌ عَنْ ذِكْرِ اللَّهِ وَإِقَامِ الصَّلَاةِ وَإِيتَاءِ الزَّكَاةِ ۚ
يَخَافُونَ يَوْمًا تَتَقَلَّبُ فِيهِ الْقُلُوبُ وَالْأَبْصَارُ ۚ

“MEN, WHOM NEITHER COMMERCE NOR SALE DISTRACTS FROM THE REMEMBRANCE OF ALLAH AND PERFORMANCE OF SALAAH (PRAYER) AND GIVING OF ZAKAAH (CHARITY). THEY FEAR A DAY IN WHICH THE HEARTS AND EYES WILL (FEARFULLY) TURN ABOUT...”

[SURAH AN-NOOR 24 : 37]

The Sahaba-e-Kiraam رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُمْ were true believing men whose businesses and trade did not prevent them from obedience, or divert their attention away from the remembrance of Allah Ta’ala, or distract them from the establishment of Salaah and the giving of Zakaah.

Why was their Salaah not affected even though they came out of business? ...Allah Ta’ala brought to my heart one very beautiful point in respect to why the Sahaba-e-Kiraam رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُمْ were not distracted in their Salaah: **Because they came out from one Ibaadah to another. From one Ibaadah, they simply entered into another Ibaadah.** They were conscious of Allah Ta’ala’s presence at all times – even in their businesses. Their business and trade was also Zikrullah. The same awareness was required for Salaah but this was their condition at all times.

In their business dealings, they were honest, truthful and cautious. When trading, their talking, selling and purchasing were all carried out in the manner sanctioned by Shari’ah. **Their intentions were noble, their efforts were clean and their earnings were Halaal and pure.** They worked so that they did not have to extend their

hands and beg of others; they worked to support their families, to contribute to good causes, to assist others, to give Zakaah and Sadaqah, to go for Hajj and so forth. Their intentions were correct and their businesses were conducted in the manner approved by Allah Ta'ala. **That person who has made his business into Ibaadah, then his concentration will remain in Salaah.**

This does not mean that whilst occupied in business, a person has to hold a Tasbeeh all the time, and read: '*SubhanAllah, SubhanAllah...*'. Hazrat Maulana Ashraf Ali Thanwi رَحْمَةُ اللهِ عَلَيْهِ mentioned that if a person is making an effort to earn a Halaal livelihood, and he is selling – for example, mangoes – and he goes on repeating: '*Mangoes, Mangoes...*', he will get the reward of Tasbeeh, because his intention and effort is to acquire Halaal sustenance.

The Sahabah رَضِيَ اللهُ عَنْهُمْ were conscious of Allah Ta'ala's presence and were mindful of all the Ahkaam (Laws) relating to trade and business. So they simply moved from one Ibaadah to another. Unlike us, our businesses are not Ibaadah. How many can say that their businesses are Ibaadah? When does the business become Ibaadah? ...When we apply the laws of Shari'ah in that business.

In the business transactions and deals, in the importing and exporting, etc. there is that conscious realisation and understanding that we are the slaves of Allah Ta'ala and He sends Rizq (sustenance); He is sending customers as a means of our livelihood. As an example: A person hands over a parcel or gift and pays the post office or the courier service to deliver it. The parcel is then delivered. Whether it's the postman or the courier, do we thank him for the parcel? We thank him for the delivery of the parcel, but we understand that the postman was just the means of

us receiving the parcel. The sender is someone else. We understand that and we do not forget the sender. Similarly, Allah Ta'ala uses people to deliver to us our Rizq – in different ways. However, He is the Provider.

If we apply the laws of Shari'ah: We do not deal in Haraam; we are honest and truthful; we do not hide defects; we do not cheat, deceive, bribe and so forth, then that Tijarah³⁶ becomes Ibaadah – and from that Ibaadah, we enter into the Ibaadah of Salaah.

If we engage in Haraam: we deal in interest; our transactions are not straight; our employees are scantily dressed women; there is music playing; we promote Christmas, Valentines, Diwali, etc.; we pay our workers poorly, mistreat and exploit them – then this is definitely and most certainly *not* Ibaadah. This will invite Allah Ta'ala's Anger and Curse and deprive the person of Barakah (blessings) in his business and earnings. Haraam indicates that there is no conscious awareness of Allah Ta'ala. It follows that the person's concentration in Salaah will be seriously affected.

So it is for us to turn our businesses into Ibaadah. It is possible. It is something that will always, always be workable and viable – in any time and age.

May Allah Ta'ala grant us the Taufeeq of being Rijal – true believing men – who are not distracted by commerce or sale, from the Zikr of Allah Ta'ala; who perform Salaah, give Zakaah willingly and happily, and who fear Allah Ta'ala in their business undertakings.

³⁶ Tijarah: Trade / Business

7

FALLEN FLOWERS

WHILST TAKING A WALK through Mitchell Park one morning, breathing in the fresh air after Fajr, we found the pathway covered with flowers, which had fallen off the trees.

I mentioned to my friends: "At one time, these flowers were on the trees. They were admired. People enjoyed and appreciated their fragrance. They would say: 'How beautiful...,' 'How sweet...' 'How charming...'. However, when the breeze touched these flowers, they left the branches of the trees. They fell onto the ground. Now we find that the same people, who once admired and enjoyed the pretty flowers, trample over them as they take their walks. These pretty, colourful and fragrant flowers have become a carpet on the ground and are crushed underfoot – as if the visitors to the park are squashing the little 'hearts' of the flowers. Soon, the garden service will sweep the flowers away and they will be thrown into some bin. Thereafter, the bin bags will be disposed of at some dump."

I then explained to my friends: Once upon a time, Muslims were like the flowers on the trees. The fragrance of their Imaan and Islam, of their pleasant character, honest speech and charming etiquette, were admired and appreciated by all. Their adherence to the Commandments of Allah Ta'ala and to the Sunnah, their sincerity and service to mankind emitted such beautiful fragrance, which even non-Muslims benefited from.

The beautiful colours of their worship, of their business transactions and social interaction were the means of not only people changing their faith, but also changing their culture and language, as we find in the time of the Sahaba-e-Kiraam رَضِيَ اللهُ عَنْهُمْ. Wherever the Sahabah رَضِيَ اللهُ عَنْهُمْ travelled in the world, they had an undeniable influence on the different nations. ...When the Muslims were flowers on the tree, people inhaled their fragrance and accepted Islam.

When the breeze of temptation and sin blew, then as we find today, many Muslims left the tree. They separated themselves from the strong, sturdy trunk of correct Aqaa'id (beliefs) and they lost the attachment they had to the branches of Ibaadaat (worship) – Salaah, Zakaah, Saum, Tilawah, etc. They adopted the cultures and customs of others, and in turn, they lost their fragrance and they lost their colours, as they withered away.

Having fallen onto the ground, the Muslim Ummah, globally, is literally being *crushed* underfoot by the enemies of Islam or devoured like a hearty meal. Rasulullah صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ warned: "The people will soon summon one another to attack you as people, when eating, invite others to share their food."

Someone asked: "Will that be because of our small numbers at that time?"

He صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ replied: **"No, you will be numerous at that time: but you will be froth and scum like that carried down by a torrent (of water), and Allah will take the fear of you from the hearts of your enemy and cast *Al-Wahn* into your hearts."**

Someone asked: “O Messenger of Allah, what is *Al-Wahn*?”

He ﷺ replied: **“Love of the world and dislike of death.”**³⁷

It is this Hubbud Dunya (love for the world) that has brought about our downfall and defeat. It is a cause of destruction to one’s Deen. Rasulullah ﷺ said: **“By Allah, I do not fear poverty for you, but I fear that the world would be abundant for you as it has been for those before you, so you compete for it as they have competed for it, and it destroys you as it has destroyed them.”**³⁸

Presently, the Ummah is beset by difficulties and tribulations. In whichever direction we turn, we find a picture to grieve over: So many spend their lives in absolute heedlessness, intoxicated by the love of this world. Sins have become a leisure activity and pursuit. Life passes in the disobedience of Allah Ta’ala. It seems as if Akhirah and Accountability have become a forgotten reality. Where, once, the lives of the Muslims were beautiful invitations for others to accept Islam, today the non-Muslims do not see any real difference between their lives and ours. We have adopted their dress, their culture and their lifestyle. Or we stand at the door of Islam and keep people out – or push them away – with our poor character and poor dealings.

So many more, from amongst our precious youth, cannot even be identified as the blossoming flowers of the Ummah. They have preferred to mix with sand and mud and in so doing, have lost their fragrance and colour. The Hollywood / Bollywood culture,

³⁷ Abu Dawood / Ahmad

³⁸ Sahih Al-Bukhari, Hadith: 3158 and Sahih Muslim.

with all its immorality and vice is that mud – more aptly, it is quicksand that traps our young Muslim sons and daughters.

And then we have the picture of the burdensome yoke of injustice, oppression and suppression. The lives of Muslims have become so cheap that thousands are ‘swept’ into mass graves, where genocide has become a play and past time for the enemies of Islam. We have the destruction of Muslim homes, the imprisonment and persecution of Muslim men, the deliberate killing of Muslim children, the rape of Muslim women, and the theft of Muslim land. Oppression compounded.

When we turn away from this sad, heart wrenching sight, we see another picture to cry over: Many, many Muslims, in positions of authority and rule, are like puppets, and their strings are pulled by non-Muslim governments. Some are treated like animals – they are ‘broken in’, or trained to listen and obey – as we find with some Muslim Governments. This brings more loss and more misery. This is our reality – from where to where, and from what to what. ...But there is no despairing; rather there is a lot of hope once we return to the obedience of Allah Ta’ala and the Sunnah of Rasulullah ﷺ. All that is required is to plant the seeds of Taqwa and those beautiful, fragrant, colourful flowers will once more bloom and blossom.

May Allah Ta’ala grant us the understanding, the concern and the Taufeeq of sincere Taubah and practice on the beautiful teachings of Deen.

THE BARRIER BETWEEN US AND ALLAH TA'ALA

UNFORTUNATELY, ONE WEAKNESS, from amongst many weaknesses, is that we look at our achievements and successes with an eye of vanity and conceit. Our gaze falls on our efforts – that we are the ones who made the effort. We attribute our success and our achievements to our hard work and sacrifice. ...What generally follows is a desire to announce and to boast; to publicise and make known. The nafs asserts itself. It wants acknowledgement. It wants to be credited.

Many, in their quest for recognition, will exaggerate their achievements – even to the Shaykh. They exaggerate so that they may be distinguished above others, counted as pious and righteous, and become recipient of praise and applause. Some get carried away by dreams and think that a few good dreams are a certification of their greatness.

This condition is not progress; it is a sickness. This is what becomes a Hijaab or a barrier between us and Allah Ta'ala. The person's gaze is on himself, on his obedience, his attributes, his efforts, his achievements and successes, forgetting The One Who blessed him with the ability and capacity. The person's good deeds, his Khidmat of Deen, his charity and welfare work, become a Fitnah for him because he sees his effort and believes that he is deserving of acknowledgement and praise. As a result, there is no spiritual progress; rather there is deterioration.

Ujub is vanity, conceit and self-love. The person admires himself and attributes importance to himself. Kibr or pride is considering oneself as superior to others; looking down upon others; seeing them as inferior. ...Vanity and pride give rise to arrogance and high-handedness. It also leads to mistreating and oppressing others, and behaving toward people in an unsympathetic and harsh way. Both Ujub and Kibr cripple a person spiritually.

It is truly the Grace of Allah Ta'ala if a person increases in humility as his good deeds increase. And this will be so, if the person keeps in mind, his shortcomings, and he understands that Taufeeq is from Allah Ta'ala alone. In the words of Hazrat Shu'aib عَلَيْهِ السَّلَام:

وَمَا تَوْفِيقِي إِلَّا بِاللَّهِ

“... AND MY ABILITY TO DO THINGS COMES FROM NONE EXCEPT ALLAH...”

[SURAH HUD 11 : 88]

The gaze should be on the Fadhl and Grace of Allah Ta'ala.

On a different platform, we find in this world of Fitnah, that the majority seek to display their achievements. They widely circulate their accomplishments on media platforms, proud of their successes. Their photographs are published in newspapers and magazines or posted on social media so that all can know and see where they are and what they are doing. ...It seems as if everyone wants to be noticed; wants to enjoy the limelight and wants a big audience.

If we are doing for show and to impress the people, then our work will be null and void in the Court of Allah Ta'ala. Allah Ta'ala will say, on the Day of Qiyamah: **“Go to those who you showed off**

your deeds to, in the worldly life; then see if you can find any reward with them!”³⁹

Allah Ta’ala is All-Knowing. If we say and do for advertisement; to broadcast and announce over radio stations and publicise on social media and other platforms, seeking name and fame, then we should remember that Allah Ta’ala is aware of our intentions.

وَيَعْلَمُ مَا تُسِرُّونَ وَمَا تُعْلِنُونَ ۚ وَاللَّهُ عَلِيمٌ بِذَاتِ الصُّدُورِ ۝

“... AND HE KNOWS WHAT YOU CONCEAL AND WHAT YOU REVEAL: AND ALLAH KNOWS WELL THE (SECRETS) OF (ALL) HEARTS.”

[SURAH AT-TAGHABUN 64 : 4]

If we do for the pleasure of Allah Ta’ala, and if Allah Ta’ala wants to make it known, He will make it known. ...Of course, happiness is different. It is natural. But the desire should be to conceal. Whenever we are talking about ourselves, we must ask ourselves:

- Why am I behaving in this manner?
- Why do I talk about my experiences?
- Is this Shukr (gratitude) and Tahdeeth-e-Ni’mat⁴⁰, or is it Riyaa (show / ostentation) which the nafs wraps up in the guise of Shukr?

There are some who say in no uncertain words, that their success is due to their hard work, their intelligence and their sacrifice; yet all that a person becomes proud of, are on account of the blessings from Allah Ta’ala. Allah Ta’ala says in the Qur’aan Shareef:

³⁹ Musnad Ahmad

⁴⁰ Tahdeeth-e-Ni’mat: Expressing openly the favours of Allah Ta’ala upon one.

وَمَا بِكُمْ مِنْ نِعْمَةٍ فَمِنَ اللَّهِ

“AND YOU HAVE NO GOOD THING BUT IT IS FROM ALLAH...”

[SURAH AN-NAHL 16 : 53]

If He gave, He can also take away. Recognise the One who has given and do not consider His bounties as your achievement... because every faculty and possession, which is a medium of securing any achievement and success, is in itself, a bounty from Allah Ta’ala – for example: our intelligence, hearing, speech, health, strength, etc. Keep addressing the nafs: **All that I succeed in, is due to Allah Ta’ala’s favour and kindness.**

Whilst a person may be doing some meritorious work, much is left to be seen – as to whether such work has been accepted or not.

Qaabiliyyat is a person’s ability whereas Qubuliyyat is acceptance. Qaabiliyyat is something that Allah Ta’ala has given to everyone, whether Muslim or non-Muslim. If Allah Ta’ala gives a person ability, then Shukr must be expressed. If a person thinks: *Because I am Qaabil (capable), I am also Maqbool (accepted)* – then he needs to have his head examined.

Hazrat Maulana Sayyid Sulaiman Nadwi رَحْمَةُ اللَّهِ عَلَيْهِ used to say:

‘Whether we live like this or whether we live like that,
What is left to be seen is how our stay there will be
(i.e. the Hereafter).’

Allah Ta’ala will inform us on the Day of Judgment as to whether He has conferred upon us the bounty of Qubuliyyat / Maqbooliyat (acceptance) – although Allah Ta’ala does give some signs of His acceptance, which the true Auliya recognise.

Whatever work we carry out and whatever other good deeds we do, then make Dua thereafter that Allah Ta’ala accepts. Consider the Tawaadhu of Hazrat Ibraheem عَلَيْهِ السَّلَام and Hazrat Isma’eel عَلَيْهِ السَّلَام, who, after building the Ka’bah Shareef, and themselves being so accepted by Allah Ta’ala, still made Dua that Allah Ta’ala accept their efforts. Allah Ta’ala relates in Surah Al-Baqarah:

وَإِذْ يَرْفَعُ إِبْرَاهِيمُ الْقَوَاعِدَ مِنَ الْبَيْتِ وَإِسْمَاعِيلُ رَبَّنَا تَقَبَّلْ مِنَّا ط

إِنَّكَ أَنْتَ السَّمِيعُ الْعَلِيمُ ۝

“AND (MENTION) WHEN IBRAHEEM WAS RAISING THE FOUNDATION OF THE HOUSE AND (WITH HIM) ISMA’EEL, (SAYING): ‘OUR LORD, ACCEPT (THIS) FROM US. INDEED, YOU ARE THE HEARING, THE KNOWING.’”

[SURAH AL-BAQARAH 2: 127]

This Dua makes manifest that there was no trace of pride or vanity or show in undertaking and completing the great task of re-constructing the Ka’bah Shareef. There was just beautiful humility and deep concern that Allah Ta’ala accepts.

If there is spiritual progress in one’s efforts in treading the path to Allah Ta’ala, then this is the Grace and Mercy of Allah Ta’ala:

وَلَوْلَا فَضْلُ اللَّهِ عَلَيْكُمْ وَرَحْمَتُهُ مَا زَكَاىَ مِنْكُمْ مِّنْ أَحَدٍ أَبَدًا وَلَكِنَّ اللَّهَ يُزَكِّي مَن يَشَاءُ ط

“... AND WERE IT NOT FOR THE GRACE AND MERCY OF ALLAH ON YOU, NOT ONE OF YOU WOULD EVER HAVE BEEN PURE: BUT ALLAH DOES PURIFY WHOM HE PLEASES...”

[SURAH AN-NOOR 2 : 21]

Otherwise the nafs, in its true state, would not gain in any good, on its own.

إِنَّ النَّفْسَ لَأَمَّارَةٌ بِالشُّوْءِ إِلَّا مَا رَحِمَ رَبِّي

“... THE NAFS IS CERTAINLY PRONE TO EVIL, UNLESS MY LORD DOES BESTOW
HIS MERCY...”

[SURAH YUSUF 12 : 53]

May Allah Ta’ala grant us the recognition of our nafs and the courage to strive against it. It is our *worst* enemy and a very shrewd enemy. Rasulullah ﷺ said: **“Your worst enemy is your nafs which lies between your sides.”**⁴¹

May Allah Ta’ala bestow His Mercy upon us, that we may be successful on this path to Him.

⁴¹ Kanzul Ummaal

9

THE BEAUTY AND AWE OF A MAN

THE BEARD IS A GREAT AND DISTINGUISHED SUNNAH, as well as a salient and outstanding sign (Shi'aar) of Islam. It was the practice of all the Ambiyaa عَلَيْهِمُ السَّلَام and was the way of all our Akaabir⁴² and Aslaaf⁴³.

In the Malfuzaat⁴⁴ of Hazrat Maulana Ashraf Ali Thanwi رَحْمَةُ اللهِ عَلَيْهِ, Hazrat Maulana رَحْمَةُ اللهِ عَلَيْهِ had encapsulated the distinction and excellence of the beard, saying that it is something so wonderful, which enhances the dignity and handsomeness of a man and makes one's appearance noble. Unfortunately, this Sunnah is disregarded and looked down upon in these days. ...It is belittled and mocked at. Many people make up excuses and reasons to discard this Sunnah.

Alhamdulillah, Allah Ta'ala has blessed our 'Ulama and Mashaa'ikh with great insight and intellect as well as the ability to negate any disparaging opinions and unfounded arguments.

On one occasion, a person said to Hazrat Maulana Ashraf Ali Thanwi رَحْمَةُ اللهِ عَلَيْهِ: *"The beard is unnatural, so it should not be kept. The fact that we were born without beards proves this!"*

⁴² Akaabir: Seniors

⁴³ Aslaaf: Pious Predecessors

⁴⁴ Malfuzaat: Words of wisdom and sterling advices of pious elders.

Hazrat Maulana Ashraf Ali Thanwi رَحْمَةُ اللهِ عَلَيْهِ replied: ***“If this is your argument, then take out all of your teeth as well. Your teeth should also not be kept, since you were born without teeth!”***

Alhamdulillah, Hazrat Maulana رَحْمَةُ اللهِ عَلَيْهِ furnished a fine response, which was sufficient to silence the man.

THE FACE OF A FATHER

Once, a person, who was highly educated and who had a distinguished post in the society, visited an ‘Aalim, in Bombay. The person had his infant child with him. When the baby saw the ‘Aalim, he started crying. The father, who was clean-shaven, said: *“The child got frightened seeing your beard.”*

In response, the ‘Aalim said: *“There is a reason behind the child’s fear. All along, this child thought that he had two mothers. When he touched your face, it was smooth. When he touched his mother’s face, her face too was smooth. This is the first time the child is seeing the face of a father... therefore there is some fear; otherwise children are not frightened by the beard.”*

BE LIKE THE LION

My respected Shaykh, Hazrat Maulana Hakeem Muhammad Akhtar Saheb رَحْمَةُ اللهِ عَلَيْهِ, had presented an apt example regarding the beard. Hazrat رَحْمَةُ اللهِ عَلَيْهِ said that the beauty and awe of the lion is in its mane. Similarly, the beauty and awe of a man lies in his beard. It symbolises his bravery and manliness.

Stressing the importance of keeping the beard, Hazrat رَحْمَةُ اللهِ عَلَيْهِ further said, by way of correcting this failing in many men, that the lion does not seek to emulate the lioness because the lion knows that he is a lion, and that his awe and beauty lies in his mane – yet man, who has been blessed with ‘Aql (intelligence) seeks to look like his counterpart – a female – by removing that splendid sign of his awe, strength and handsomeness. Even a lion seems to know better!

Those who shave their beards should keep in mind that Rasulullah صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ cursed those men who emulate or seek to resemble females and vice versa.

The beauty of a man is his beard. There are a group of angels who read the following Tasbeeh⁴⁵: *“Glory be to Allah, who gave beauty to men with their beards and who gave beauty to women with their locks of hair.”*⁴⁶ ...A Khalifah⁴⁷ of Hazrat Maulana Hakeem Muhammad Akhtar Saheb رَحْمَةُ اللهِ عَلَيْهِ, who also composes poetry, said: *“If the beard was going to make a person look ugly, it would not have been the Sunnah of my Beloved صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ.”*

COMPULSORY SUNNAH

Rasulullah صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ said: **“Lengthen the beards and shorten/remove the moustaches.”**⁴⁸

⁴⁵ Tasbeeh : incantation / glorifying Allah Ta’ala

⁴⁶ Musnadul Firdous

⁴⁷ Khalifah: spiritual appointee

⁴⁸ Sahih Al-Bukhari and Sahih Muslim

To keep the beard one fist length is Waajib (compulsory) and to shave or shorten it less than this is forbidden. Of course, the beard should not be unkempt. The person should maintain the Sunnah length, as well as the neatness of his beard.

In this day and age – more than fourteen centuries later – research confirms that there are health benefits and various advantages for men to keep beards. The same has been proven with many other Sunnats, such as wearing the pants above the ankle, etc. ...We do not need to wait for medical proof or scientific research to prove the benefits of the Sunnah. Our belief in the supremacy of the Sunnah and Shari'ah is not dependent on scientific proofs.

On a lighter note, there was a survey that was taken in Europe and the majority of women there said that they would choose a man with a beard over a man without a beard. So this is the “Fatwa” of the European women.

BEAUTIFUL PROOF

There are many Ahadīth which clearly convey the obligatory nature of the beard and the importance of keeping the beard one fist length. Alhamdulillah, there are many detailed articles and even Kitaabs on the subject matter of the beard, with authentic, strong proofs. Our Shaykh, Hazrat Maulana Hakeem Muhammad Akhtar Saheb رَحْمَةُ اللهِ عَلَيْهِ had presented a wonderful proof from the Qur'aan Shareef, of the beard being one fist length.

In Surah TaHa, Allah Ta'ala relates the story of Hazrat Musa عَلَيْهِ السَّلَام in great detail. When Hazrat Musa عَلَيْهِ السَّلَام returned to his people

from Mount Toor, he found them gone astray in the worship of the gold calf. Angered by their ignorant behavior, he grabbed hold of the beard of his brother, Hazrat Haroon عَلَيْهِ السَّلَام, and asked him regarding the situation of the Bani Isra'eel. In response, Hazrat Haroon عَلَيْهِ السَّلَام said:

قَالَ يَبْنَؤُمْ لَا تَأْخُذْ بِلِحْيَتِي وَلَا بِرَأْسِي ج

“HE SAID: ‘O SON OF MY MOTHER, DO NOT SEIZE (ME) BY MY BEARD OR BY MY HEAD...’”

[SURAH TAHA 20 : 94]

Hazrat Maulana رَحْمَةُ اللهِ عَلَيْهِ explained that Hazrat Musa عَلَيْهِ السَّلَام had grabbed hold of the beard of Hazrat Haroon عَلَيْهِ السَّلَام, which clearly indicates that the beard could not have been anything less than one fist length. To grasp or catch hold of someone’s beard, there has to be length in that beard! ⁴⁹سُبْحَانَ اللَّهِ

Hazrat Maulana رَحْمَةُ اللهِ عَلَيْهِ would also say that Jannah is the place where men will be beardless. So long as we are in this world, we have to follow the Shari’ah. We should not try to be Jannatis “in advance”. To do so, would place us in the displeasure of Allah Ta’ala.

EXCUSE

Sadly, many Muslims avoid this great Sunnah. If not, then to appease themselves, some keep a short beard – a goatee or a designer beard – as some describe the different look beards.

⁴⁹ Glory be to Allah

How many are wont to say: *'The heart has to be clean.'*? ...Had there been any thought to this statement, we would find it to be a flimsy excuse and a feeble justification from the nafs. ...We should think: Was not the heart of Rasulullah ﷺ or the hearts of his companions, and all the righteous ones who followed them, clean? Are our hearts really so clean, or cleaner than theirs? ...If the heart of the eagle is sound, but its wings are clipped, will it ever soar in the skies? ...No.

Hazrat Maulana Hakeem Muhammad Akhtar Saheb رَحْمَةُ اللهِ عَلَيْهِ had given the example of a plane: If the plane has the best engine but has no wheels, or if one wheel of the plane is punctured, will the plane be able to fly? ...No.

No doubt, the beard, itself, is not the only requirement. Both the outer and inner self have to conform to the teachings of Rasulullah ﷺ. To progress in Deen, we require both the Zaahir (external) and the Baatin (internal).

GIVING UP THE SIN OF SHAVING ONE'S BEARD

There are many laws governing Municipal gardens and parks and public areas. No person can cut down, damage, destroy or remove plants, trees or other shrubs. Any person who violates or fails to comply with these laws is guilty of an offence and is liable to a fine, if convicted.

The beard is the garden of Rasulullah ﷺ. There are laws that govern this beautiful Sunnah garden. A person cannot remove this garden from his face; cannot disfigure it by shaving off the

sides, etc. or by shortening it. The regulation is to keep it one fist length. If a person does not comply with this law of Allah Ta'ala, then the person is guilty of a very serious offence.

The person who is clean-shaven is – **as if** – announcing: **I am not happy with the face of Rasulullah** صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ نَعُوذُ بِاللّٰهِ . It may not be said in words, but we know that actions speak louder than words!

When a person stands in front of the mirror to shave his beard, then he should say to himself: *What a sinful person I am, that I choose to shave off this beautiful garden; this beautiful Sunnah of the beard! This action of mine causes great grief and sorrow to my Nabi* صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ ... *My shaving my beard is shaving the sensitive heart of my Nabi* صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ !

Each time the razor is taken to shave one's face, talk to Allah Ta'ala and acknowledge the wrong. Say: *O Allah, I am so foolish by committing this sin. Even worse is that I do this knowingly and I place myself under Your anger 24/7. I am acknowledging my weakness, and I ask for Your assistance to overcome this terrible failing from my side, and to bring alive the Sunnah of Your Beloved* صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ , *on my face and in my life!*

Keep addressing oneself in this manner. Insha-Allah, this will hold one back from shaving one's beard and will be a quick remedy in giving up a very grave sin. Insha-Allah, this will offer incentive to grow the beard one fist length, to have some resemblance to the Beloved صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ .

If we adorn our faces with the Sunnah of the beard, and we adopt the libaas (dressing) of the Beloved of Allah Ta’ala صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ , at least on the Day of Qiyamah, we can say:

*“O Allah, I have come with the outward form of
Your Beloved صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ .
O Allah, You give me the Haqeeqat (reality).
I have come with the outer appearance.”⁵⁰*

...One brother wrote to Hazrat Maulana Ashraf Ali Thanwi رَحْمَةُ اللهِ عَلَيْهِ and said that he was keeping his beard as is Sunnah – one fist length. However, people were laughing and mocking at him. Hazrat Maulana رَحْمَةُ اللهِ عَلَيْهِ replied: **“Let them laugh. At least you will not cry on the Day of Judgment!”**

Do not allow the teasing and mocking of people to discourage you from the obedience of Allah Ta’ala. They will be of no assistance to you in the grave or in the Court of Allah Ta’ala, on the Day of Judgment. So be strong and courageous. Make Allah Ta’ala happy. Then you too will enjoy happiness. On the Day of Judgment, you will be laughing and rejoicing.

وُجُوهُ يَوْمَئِذٍ مُّسْفِرَةٌ ۖ ضَاحِكَةٌ مُّسْتَبْشِرَةٌ ۖ

**“(MANY) FACES ON THAT DAY SHALL BE BRIGHT; LAUGHING, JOYOUS
(AT GOOD NEWS).”**

[SURAH ‘ABASA 80 : 38/39]

TEST OF LOVE

Some incidents really take be us by surprise and sometimes stun us. The level of our Imaan becomes evident in the face of even small tests.

A young person, with a beard, Deeni libaas (attire) and who is a five-time Namaazi requested me for permission to shave his beard. Why? ...Due to an application which was made for a visa to a certain country. The person in charge of the department told him that he stands no chance with his beard. So he said: *"I just want permission to shave my beard and get the application through. Once I've got my papers, I'll keep my beard again."*

I said: *"Bhai, have I made the Shari'ah that I can give you permission to shave your beard? ...What about the displeasure of Allah Ta'ala? If you want to shave and displease Allah Ta'ala, why make me a partner in your sin?"*

...If there is deficiency in our love for Allah Ta'ala and Rasulullah ﷺ then there will be weakness in being steadfast on Deen. Love is the catalyst to practise on Deen happily and submit to the Commandments of Allah Ta'ala eagerly and sincerely. If there is genuine love, then we won't waver and weaken in the obedience of Allah Ta'ala and Rasulullah ﷺ, rather we will persevere and become stronger, Insha-Allah.

⁵⁰ Composed by Khwaja Azizul Hasan Majzoob رَحْمَةُ اللَّهِ عَلَيْهِ

This love for Allah Ta'ala, for Rasulullah ﷺ and for Deen is most easily obtained from the hearts of those who have the reality of it in their hearts. In their company, we will get that steam of love. Otherwise, shaytaan will easily convince us to indulge in Haraam in spite of our Ibaadaat and work of Deen.

So I asked the brother: *“What guarantee do you have that the Angel of death won’t extract your soul while the razor is moving down your face? What guarantee do you have that even if you get those documents, you will live to see a few more months, so that the beard grows one fist length?”*

Alhamdulillah, the brother made sincere Taubah and kept his beard.

THE DISPLEASURE OF RASULULLAH ﷺ

A doctor also mentioned to me that he had made an application, in a certain country, for work purposes. He too was told the same thing: People will not give him much consideration because of his beard and Kurta. He was told that if he shaved his beard and wore a suit, he would get some prominence. So he said that he fell for the temptation. He shaved his beard, wore the suit and went for the interview.

He is a pious doctor, a Namaazi, with concern for Deen and Shari’ah, but he fell for the trap of shaytaan and nafs and shaved his beard. ...He related: *“I swear Maulana that I am speaking the truth. That same night, I saw Rasulullah ﷺ in a dream and he stared at my face with anger. I could see the anger on his face. When he walked into the room, in my dream, the room became*

brightly lit. He then stared at me; his face, red with anger. He then suddenly left and the room went dark. And I got up with a fright."

He did not know what to do and it worried him greatly. Of course, he made sincere Taubah and grew his beard again.

Naturally, it should go without saying, that Islam is not just the beard. Islamic teachings cover all aspects of life. However, let us understand that the beard is a significant feature in the life of a Muslim and a distinguished Sunnah. ...Those of us who have beards should not consider ourselves better or superior. This attitude or pride will certainly bring spiritual destruction.

It is also narrated in the Ahādīth that on one occasion two emissaries came to Madinatul Munawwarah. They were from the court of the Emperor Kisra and were clean shaven and had long moustaches. Rasulullah ﷺ disliked their appearance very much. He ﷺ turned his blessed face away from them and asked: *"Who ordered you to make your appearance like this?"*

They replied: *"Our Lord, Kisra, orders us to shave our beards and lengthen our moustaches."*

Rasulullah ﷺ replied: ***"My Rabb commanded me to lengthen my beard and clip my moustache."***⁵¹

We should reflect over this incident and the dislike and aversion that was evident from Rasulullah ﷺ, and ask ourselves: *On the Day of Judgment, would I want that my Nabi ﷺ turns*

⁵¹ At Tabaqatul Kubra of Ibn Sa'd, Al Bidayah Wan Nihayah

his face away from me for having forsaken his Sunnah and adopting the way which he disliked and disapproved so much?

May Allah Ta'ala grant us such Imaan that we are steadfast on Deen. May Allah Ta'ala give to us such intense love for Him, that it becomes extremely easy to do that which is pleasing to Him and stay away from everything that is Haraam and forbidden. May Allah Ta'ala grant us true love and appreciation for the Sunnah of the Beloved ﷺ.

DISPUTES IN MARRIAGE | THE REPERCUSSIONS

A HUSBAND COMPLAINED to me that he was always angry with his wife, and they continuously argued. ...There are so many such cases: If the husband is not complaining about his wife, the wife is complaining about her husband.

In this case, the husband mentioned the trying situation he was in and certain weaknesses of the wife, which are common weaknesses. In advising him, I said: *“Whilst women have weaknesses, men also have weaknesses. However, giving vent to your anger and cursing your wife is only inviting difficulties and problems upon yourself...”*

I then explained to him: *“When you curse your wife on her defiance, or her non-cooperation, or her indifference, or her non-fulfilment of your rights, then Allah Ta’ala’s Azaab⁵² descends upon her. Then she will not be the only one who will suffer. As her husband, you too will suffer. If she is afflicted with a severe illness or meets up with an accident, you will find great difficulty since she will not be able to take care of the children, the home, etc. The burden of expense – of medication, treatment and hospitalisation – also falls upon you, as the husband. And if she has to curse you, she too will find herself in a situation of trial and difficulty...”*

It may be that Allah Ta’ala accepts the curse, and as a result, the husband’s entire business collapses. Then poverty becomes the lot

of not just the husband, but also the wife who cursed, as well as the children. There are so many ways that curses are accepted.

Alhamdulillah, the husband explained the same to his wife and they both agreed that arguing and cursing were not solutions.

There are many who have the bad habit of cursing their spouses and children – and this is generally due to impatience, intolerance and frustration. Instead of turning to Allah Ta’ala and making Du’aa, they utter such words, which sometimes finds acceptance in the heavens, but which becomes a source of great regret. Thereafter, when Allah Ta’ala’s punishment descends, then the person is left lamenting his or her plight.

It is due to this tendency of cursing and being ungrateful to their husbands that Rasulallah ﷺ directed women towards giving charity.⁵³

...Keep in mind the great rewards that will accrue when a person avoids arguments. Rasulallah ﷺ said: **“I guarantee a house in the outskirts of Paradise to the one who gives up arguing even if he were on the right side.”**⁵⁴

Rasulallah ﷺ said: **“Anger comes from the shaytaan...”**⁵⁵. Arguments and rifts between spouses are the cause of satisfaction and joy to shaytaan, whose great effort is to also destroy marriages. Arguments are the stepping stones to enmity between

⁵² Azaab: punishment

⁵³ Sahih Al-Bukhari and Sahih Muslim

⁵⁴ Sunan Abu Dawood

⁵⁵ Sunan Abu Dawood

husband and wife, and can end up with heart-break, divorce, a broken home and a lot of trauma.

Rasulullah ﷺ said: “Indeed, Iblees places his throne on the [ocean’s] water. He then dispatches his troops. The one who is closest to him is he who creates the most amount of Fitnah.

One of them comes to him and reports: *‘I did such and such a deed.’*

Iblees replies: *‘You haven’t done anything.’*

Another of them then says: *‘I did not spare so and so until I caused a separation between a husband and his wife.’*

Iblees brings him close to him, embraces him, and says: *‘You have done well.’*⁵⁶

Who does not want a happy marriage? Who does not want Sukoon (tranquility) in marriage? ...However, to achieve this, some effort has to be made. We will have to train ourselves to adopt Hilm (tolerance) and Sabr (patience), and learn to curb the tendency to argue and fight – which is so common, and that too, for trivial reasons. Arguments just shatter the peace and Sukoon of married and family life.

I always advise that we should not go by the book of ‘My Rights’; rather go by the book of Love, Ihsaan and Khidmat. Practise on the Sunnah: Smiling at one’s spouse, greeting with Salaam, assisting each other in the obedience of Allah Ta’ala, as well as helping in

⁵⁶ Sahih Muslim, Hadith: 7037

the domestic chores will cement the hearts of husband and wife and will offer a great fortification for one's marriage.

May Allah Ta'ala grant us the understanding and the Taufeeq of adopting noble and beautiful character when dealing with our spouses. May Allah Ta'ala grant us happy marriages and make our marriages Jannah in this world.

BOASTING AND CLAIMING GREATNESS

AMONGST ALLAH TA'ALA'S BEAUTIFUL NAMES ARE: 'الْمُكَبِّرُ' (The Supreme), 'الْكَبِيرُ' (The Greatest), 'الْجَلِيلُ' (Majestic), 'الْقَوِيُّ' (Most Strong) and 'الْقَادِرُ' (All-Powerful). Many more attributes make evident Allah Ta'ala's Greatness and Power. The entire Qur'aan Shareef is an exposition of Allah Ta'ala's Supremacy and Greatness.

Man's helplessness, weakness and vulnerability becomes manifest when he recognises his Creator. When there is no recognition, man considers his own might, strength, power and force as great. This is the deception of nafs and shaytaan.

When anyone makes a claim that he is great, he inevitably faces humiliation and ruin. ...Fir'aun uttered the greatest lie:

فَقَالَ أَنَا رَبُّكُمُ الْأَعْلَى ۖ

“AND HE SAID: ‘I AM YOUR SUPREME LORD.’”

[SURAH AN-NAZI'AAT 79 : 24]

Allah Ta'ala's punishment encompassed him:

فَأَخَذَهُ اللَّهُ نَكَالَ الْآخِرَةِ وَالْأُولَى ۖ

“SO, ALLAH SEIZED HIM FOR AN EXEMPLARY PUNISHMENT IN THE HEREAFTER AND THE PRESENT WORLD.”

[SURAH AN-NAZI'AAT 79 : 25]

For all Fir'aun's claims of being powerful, the waters of the Red Sea engulfed him. He and his army drowned:

ثُمَّ أَغْرَقْنَا الْآخَرِينَ ط

THEN WE DROWNED THE OTHERS.

[SURAH ASH-SHU'ARA 26 : 66]

Allah Ta'ala mentions the story of Qa'run in the Qur'aan Shareef. He had so much of wealth that the keys to his treasures would have been a burden to a group of strong men.

وَاتَيْنَاهُ مِنَ الْكُنُوزِ مَا إِنَّ مَفَاتِحَهُ لَتَنُوزُ بِالْعِصْبَةِ أُولَى الْقُوَّةِ ف

“... AND WE HAD GIVEN TO HIM SUCH TREASURES AS THEIR KEYS WOULD WEIGH TOO HEAVY FOR A STRONG GROUP OF PEOPLE...”

[SURAH AL-QASAS 28 : 76]

Qa'run was intoxicated in his love for wealth. He became proud and arrogant due to his knowledge and due to the great wealth he had amassed, and he denied Allah Ta'ala's favours:

قَالَ إِنَّمَا أُوتِيْنِيْهُ عَلَىٰ عِلْمٍ عِنْدِي ط

“HE SAID: ‘THIS IS GIVEN TO ME BECAUSE OF THE KNOWLEDGE (I HAVE) WITH ME.’”

[SURAH AL-QASAS 28 : 78]

What became of him? ...On his claim of being independent, on his pride and arrogance, and his rejection of Allah Ta'ala, Allah Ta'ala caused the earth to swallow and digest him and his wealth.

فَحَسَفْنَا بِهِ وَبِدَارِهِ الْأَرْضَ قَفْ

“THEN WE MADE HIM AND HIS HOME SINK INTO THE EARTH...”

[SURAH AL-QASAS 28 : 81]

In history, we learnt of the Spanish Armada. It was described as “invincible” – only to be completely defeated. When the Titanic set off on its maiden voyage, the claim was that it was “unsinkable”. It sank on its maiden journey.

A famous boxer made a huge claim: *“I am the greatest!”* When he made that claim, he was floored. Alhamdulillah, Allah Ta’ala destined Islam for him and he acknowledged that Allah Ta’ala is the greatest. When diagnosed with sickness, he openly stated: *“Allah gave me this illness to remind me that I am not number one – He is. I am not the greatest, Allah is!”*

The claim of superiority and greatness does not befit the slaves and servants of Allah Ta’ala. These attributes are solely and exclusively the attributes of Allah Ta’ala. ...Recognising Allah Ta’ala’s Sovereignty, Greatness and Power engenders within us Abdiyyat (servitude), submission and humility. These are the qualities that will earn us closeness to Allah Ta’ala and they are from amongst the outstanding virtues of those who are recipient to Allah Ta’ala’s special Mercy. Allah Ta’ala says:

وَعِبَادُ الرَّحْمَنِ الَّذِينَ يَمْشُونَ عَلَى الْأَرْضِ هَوْنًا

“THE SERVANTS OF AR-RAHMAAN (THE ALL-MERCIFUL) ARE THOSE WHO WALK ON THE EARTH, HUMBLY...”

[SURAH AL-FURQAAN 25 : 63]

The more the success of a person, the more the humility his success should engender. Take a lesson from the tree: **When laden with fruit, the branches bend in humility. If they have to show their 'greatness', they will snap or break.** Similarly, when a slave of Allah Ta'ala tries to show his greatness and independence, he 'breaks'.

Allah Ta'ala says: **"Pride is My cloak and Greatness is My garment; so whoever competes with Me regarding these two will be thrown into the Hellfire."**⁵⁷⁵⁸

May Allah Ta'ala purify us of the diseases of Ujub (vanity) and Kibr (pride) and grant us the reality of Abdiyyat (servitude) and Tawaadhu (humility).

⁵⁷ Sunan Abu Dawud

⁵⁸ The implied meaning is Pride and Supremacy belong to Allah Ta'ala Alone.

A LESSON IN BEGGING

THERE ARE SIGNS OUTSIDE THE HARAM in Makkah Shareef and Madina Shareef, which clearly prohibit begging. Outside our Masjid also, we have a sign that reads: **“No Begging.”** But this is *outside* the Masjid. There is no begging *outside* the Masjid and, indeed, Shari’ah discourages begging, unless the person is destitute and in dire need.

Islam teaches us that a person should maintain his respect and dignity and strive to earn a Halaal living rather than ask of people. Rasulullah ﷺ said: **“It is better for anyone to take a rope (to tie wood from the forest), then bring a bundle of wood over his back and sell it, whereby Allah will save his face (from the Hell-Fire), rather than he asks the people who may give him or not.”**⁵⁹

The Hadīth also informs us: **“The upper (giving) hand is superior to the lower (taking) hand.”**⁶⁰

On another level, a Muslim must beg – but a Muslim must beg only of Allah Ta’ala. This is something beloved to Allah Ta’ala. Rasulullah ﷺ said: **“There is nothing more honourable (better) to Allah than Dua.”**⁶¹

If we have to repeatedly ask of human beings, they will become angry and displeased. If we have to ask of Allah Ta’ala, then He

⁵⁹ Sahih Al-Bukhari

⁶⁰ Sahih Al-Bukhari / Sahih Muslim

⁶¹ Sunan Tirmidhi, Hadith: 3370 / Sunan Ibn Majah, Hadith: 3829

becomes happy and pleased. The more we ask of Allah Ta'ala, the more pleased Allah Ta'ala becomes. If we do not ask of Allah Ta'ala, Allah Ta'ala becomes displeased. Allah Ta'ala's treasures are unlimited. ...So, whether inside the Masjid or anywhere else, and at every time, we must beg of Allah Ta'ala.

We find that beggars teach us how to beg of Allah Ta'ala. We have seen in Makkah Shareef, as well as in other places, how beggars follow people, and they persist and insist in asking from them, to the extent of even catching the person's garment. They even cry for something; for anything. ...They just refuse to leave until something is given to them. They have the Yaqeen that the person they are begging from has something and will give them what they are asking for if they persist. They teach us a lesson of how to beg of Allah Ta'ala when we are inside the Haram Shareef or whenever we are making Dua.

Sadly, we do not consider Who we are asking from when we make Dua. As such, we make Dua casually, in a relaxed manner, while leaning against the wall, with legs stretched out. At times there is no effort made to even raise the begging bowls of the hands. ...Our hands are begging bowls to beg of Allah Ta'ala. When we make our Dua⁶², I usually say: *O MY ALLAH, we are extending these hands of ours ... which are the begging bowls that You have attached to our bodies ... so that we may extend them before You at any part of the day and night, and seek from You. ...O ALLAH, it is not a shame; rather it is a great honour and privilege to beg of You.*

⁶² A transcript of one of Hazrat Maulana's comprehensive Duas is available in book form and can be downloaded from the website yunuspatel.co.za. This book also includes etiquettes of Du'aa

Whilst we should be adopting humbleness and we should be showing our need before Allah Ta'ala, we make Dua in a laid-back, careless manner – and we say that we *begged* of Allah Ta'ala. We sometimes do not even have conviction that Allah Ta'ala will give, will do and will provide. ...This is a far cry from the beggars who beg from human beings! Those beggars teach us to keep begging – to keep asking, and to ask of Allah Ta'ala with full Yaqeen: *'O Allah, there is no shortage in Your Treasures... You have unlimited treasures. Everything is in Your control... Grant us complete forgiveness....'*

Nothing is difficult for Allah Ta'ala to do – and Allah Ta'ala will answer our cry if we beg sincerely. Rasulullah ﷺ said: **“Indeed Allah Ta'ala is extremely ‘Bashful’ and Generous. If His servant raises his hands to Him (in supplication) He becomes ‘shy’ to return them empty.”**⁶³

Someone has very aptly said: *“The one who asks of people will remain dissatisfied and deprived; the one who asks of Allah Ta'ala will not be disappointed.”* So ask of Allah Ta'ala. Allah Ta'ala is the One who responds to the Duas of His servants:

وَقَالَ رَبُّكُمْ ادْعُونِي أَسْتَجِبْ لَكُمْ ط

“AND YOUR LORD SAYS: CALL ON ME; I WILL ANSWER YOUR (DU'AA)...”

[SURAH AL-MU`MIN 40 : 60]

Keep the gaze on Allah Ta'ala alone. ...Trust in Allah Ta'ala alone.
...Have your expectations in Allah Ta'ala alone.

⁶³ Sunan Tirmidhi, Hadith: 3556

We should also understand that Allah Ta'ala, in His Wisdom, answers Duas in different ways. Rasulullah ﷺ said: "Any Muslim who makes a Dua which does not contain a request for anything sinful or anything regarding the severance of family ties, Allah grants him one of three things most assuredly; namely,

- 1.) What he has asked is granted immediately,
- 2.) What he has asked is saved for him as a treasure in the Akhirah,
- 3.) Allah wards away some calamity from him in lieu of the object asked for."⁶⁴

May Allah Ta'ala grant us all the Taufeeq of raising our hands and asking of Him, with humility, sincerity and with conviction.

⁶⁴ Tabarani - Kitab-ud-Dua

CHARGING THE EMERGENCY LIGHTS OF GOOD DEEDS

IN THESE TIMES OF LOAD-SHEDDING⁶⁵, there are so many advertisements which market generators, emergency lights, gas stoves and whatever else which offers an instant or quick solution to power cuts.

When load-shedding was introduced, the sales of all these products soared. It seemed as if everyone wanted to make some quick money selling anything that would benefit people during times of load-shedding. And because we are so dependent on electricity, we were and are prepared to spend money in purchasing any product, so long as we are not inconvenienced during power failures.

The very many complaints that were verbalized, as well as published in various newspapers, due to the load-shedding and the power cuts that were taking place, made evident the impatience, frustration and intolerance of people. It was too much of an inconvenience, loss of working hours and inevitably, loss in business and profit, and everyone was unwilling to accept even a few hours without electricity.

Nevertheless, some lessons came to mind on observing how, at the time of a power failure or power cut, these emergency lights

⁶⁵ Disconnecting or cutting off the electric current on certain lines when the demand becomes greater than the supply.

automatically take over the responsibility of providing light, and generators take over in providing electricity.

The emergency lights that we purchase have to be plugged into a power point and left to charge, so that when we experience power failure or load shedding, they immediately provide light. The condition for the benefit is that the emergency light is plugged in and charged for a considerable period of time. Whilst we do not see anything happening when the light is being charged, we know that something very significant is happening – **and the benefit will be evident when there is darkness.** We have the reassurance that the moment there is a power cut, the emergency light will take over in providing light. ...If it was not plugged in and charged, it will not serve its purpose. We will remain in darkness when there is a power cut.

We should take lesson when the lights go off and we should utilize the opportunity for a little Muraqabah (meditation): **When the light of our lives switches off, no surgeon can switch that light on again. When the light of life is gone, no medication will bring it back.**

We should ask ourselves: What preparations have been made for the power cut that must inevitably occur to our lives? What will happen when our lives will be switched off permanently and we will have to enter the darkness of the grave? Here, in this worldly life, we have emergency lights and generators... but the same will not be of any assistance to us in the grave. No one will be taking emergency lights to light up his grave.

So when we cannot tolerate a few hours of darkness in this world, how will we be able to tolerate the darkness of the grave? When we cannot accept material loss due to load-shedding, how can we accept spiritual loss with the on-going load-shedding in our hearts, due to our excessive indulgence in sins; of which the consequences are extremely harmful and damaging to our Deen, as well as to our worldly lives and our lives after death?

Just as the emergency lights are being charged for a purpose, so too, we need to 'charge' ourselves spiritually, with sincere, righteous deeds. Our 'emergency lights' take the form of our Salaah, Zakaah, Fasting, Zikr, Tilawah and so forth. The benefit will be seen when the light of our lives is switched off.

After our souls are extracted from our bodies and we are placed in our graves, our Imaan and our good deeds generate Noor⁶⁶ which automatically light up our graves and we experience the comfort of life in the grave – until Qiyamah. If we have not secured noble deeds and charged them with Ikhlāas (sincerity), and if we spend our lives in the darkness of sins, then the grave will be a place of darkness and sorrow. May Allah Ta'ala protect us all.

We know that it is the power plant that makes electricity. And this electricity flows through transmission lines to sub-stations and electric poles; and thereafter, via distribution lines, electricity enters our homes.

Allah Ta'ala blessed us with the Power House of His Love: Rasulullah ﷺ. Rasulullah ﷺ passed on this love of

⁶⁶Noor: Spiritual light or effulgence

Allah Ta'ala into the hearts of his companions, who in turn passed on that love to those who kept their company – and in this way, Allah Ta'ala established the 'transmission lines' of His Love and we find in each era and time, the Auliya-Allah do the work of 'distributing' Allah Ta'ala's love in the hearts of people.

By keeping the company of the Ahlullah, our hearts are charged with the Love of Allah Ta'ala and with the courage for good deeds. The Mashaa'ikh teach us the Love of Allah Ta'ala and His Rasul ﷺ – in fact, they generate that love into our hearts, and they guide us to the best deeds. These are the deeds that serve as our 'emergency lights'!

There is no fee for the knowledge they disseminate or the good deeds they teach us, and there is no fee for the good company they offer us. It is free from their side. It is only for us to appreciate and value, and for us to take benefit from what they generously and willingly share. They give. They don't take. So we don't need to worry about loss in wealth; rather their company is an investment with great profits, in both worlds. Allah Ta'ala also directs us to their company:

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا اتَّقُوا اللَّهَ وَكُونُوا مَعَ الصَّادِقِينَ ○

“O YOU WHO BELIEVE, FEAR ALLAH AND JOIN THE COMPANY OF THE TRUTHFUL ONES (THE PIOUS, THE AULIYA ALLAH).”

[SURAH AT-TAUBAH 9 : 119]

...That is, we should remain with them, until we become like them, until we too become spiritually charged with the Love and Ma'rifat of Allah Ta'ala, and with obedience to Allah Ta'ala and His Rasul ﷺ.

With this effort – where we develop our Imaan and spiritually charge ourselves with good deeds, death becomes a ‘gift’ for the Believer as is described in the Hadīth⁶⁷. Insha-Allah, when we die, we will be taking with us a heart imbued with Imaan and Love for Allah Ta’ala and His Rasul ﷺ as well as the “emergency lights” of good deeds. Insha-Allah, our graves will light up brightly when we enter them and will offer us great comfort and joy.

May Allah Ta’ala grant us the understanding, the Taufeeq of Amal and grant us death on Imaan.

⁶⁷ Al Mu’jamul Kabir

DO NOT JUSTIFY SINS

BEING HUMAN, we all have weaknesses, flaws and faults. None of us can claim to be perfect. The important thing is to acknowledge our weaknesses, short-comings and failings. We should not make a mockery of this beautiful Deen by justifying our wrong actions or by legalising sins.

There is no doubt that we are living in times of great Fitnah. Fitnah⁶⁸ are literally raining down upon us. This is what we were informed would happen. Rasulullah ﷺ once said (to the people): *“Do you see what I see?”*

They replied: *“No.”*

Rasulullah ﷺ said: ***“I see Fitnah (trials) descending in your homes like the falling rain.”***⁶⁹

This was in respect to the coming generations and what they would experience and would have to contend with. As for the Sahaba-e-Kiraam رَضِيَ اللهُ عَنْهُمْ, they belonged to the first era of what is described as ‘Khairul Quroon’ (the noblest eras of Islam).

Despite the vicious environment of Fitnah and sins today, there can be no justification for disobedience to Allah Ta’ala. Yes, a greater effort needs to be made to protect ourselves from the

⁶⁸ Fitnah: (Plural of Fitnah) Trials

⁶⁹ Sahih Al-Bukhari

downpour of Fitan. This is totally possible – if we hold firmly to the beautiful teachings of the Qur’aan Shareef and Sunnah; if we keep to the company of the pious and righteous, and we continuously seek protection in Allah Ta’ala from all tribulations and evils. Rasulallah ﷺ said: **“Seek refuge in Allah from trials, whether apparent or hidden.”**⁷⁰ And Rasulallah ﷺ taught us a Dua whereby we seek refuge from all types of Fitan:

أَعُوذُ بِاللَّهِ مِنَ الْفِتَنِ؛ مَا ظَهَرَ مِنْهَا وَ مَا بَطَنَ

“I seek refuge in Allah from apparent and hidden trials.”

Together with this, we should keep making a concerted effort ourselves to abstain from sins as well as from all the venues of sins. ...However, to commit sins and justify sins is not the attitude and stance of a true Believer. Unfortunately, we find nowadays, that many take sins very lightly and indifferently. Worse still is that many will find some “reason” or excuse or validation for indulgence in sins – نَعُوذُ بِاللَّهِ.

Rasulallah ﷺ was once questioned: “What is Imaan (faith)?”

He ﷺ replied: **“When your good deeds give you happiness and when your evil deeds cause you grief.”**⁷¹

What is our condition then, if instead of feeling grief, we substantiate and endorse sins?

⁷⁰ Sahih Muslim

⁷¹ Musnad Ahmad

I receive so many letters and many phone-calls from different people and most choose to be anonymous. Some statements are of a nature which makes our hair stand on end – they are so dangerous and jeopardising to a person’s Imaan. Some of them write that if Rasulullah ﷺ had been present in this time, he ﷺ too would have permitted this and that – which is Haraam; he too would have integrated with the society by participating in the World Cup and attending the sports matches, he too would have legalised interest, etc. نَعُوذُ بِاللَّهِ. Some say that the laws of inheritance and Talaaq are unfair and unjust, that certain Shar’i laws need some kind of amendment, etc. نَعُوذُ بِاللَّهِ.

We must be very, very careful about the type of statements we make.

We are living in times where many do not value the priceless bounties of Imaan and Islam. In a Hadīth, Rasulullah ﷺ described this period of time as: **“...a man will be a Believer in the morning and a disbeliever by the evening, and a Believer in the evening and a disbeliever in the morning...”**⁷²...This will be the condition, due to the statements made and the actions carried out, which nullify Imaan.

Our condition brings to mind a lengthy Hadīth in respect to the deterioration of the Ummah. The outline of the Hadīth is that Rasulullah ﷺ said, while addressing the Sahabah رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُمْ: **“What will be your condition (that is, of the Ummah) when you will not enjoin good and forbid evil? ...What will be your**

⁷² Sahih Muslim

condition when you will take the good deeds as evil, and evil deeds as good? ...What will then be your condition when you will order evil, and prohibit from doing good deeds?"⁷³

Amr-bil-Ma'roof and Nahy-anil-Munkar are salient features in the life of a Muslim. Among the major sins that we commit is that we have stopped inviting towards good and we have stopped preventing people from Haraam deeds. Instead, we invite others to Haraam and we prevent them from doing good. We now consider evil deeds as good and we consider good deeds as evil – just as is mentioned in the Hadīth.

...It is as if we do not want to go alone to Jahannum, so we pull others along with us. We invite them to Zina, drugs, drink, music, pornography, to the rave clubs, casinos and other Haraam establishments. May Allah Ta'ala give us the realization that we are paving the way to our destruction and the destruction of others.

My dear brothers, I have great love for you and great compassion and affection for you in my heart and I sincerely make deep-hearted Dua for you, as well as for those who are listening via audio-streaming and via the receivers. ...I am warning and cautioning you, and I have given this warning in other talks as well: If a person is committing a sin, then at the least, **do not justify it.**

We are weak. Therefore, say: *O Allah, it is my weakness; it is my failing.* ...But do not try to justify the wrong.

⁷³ Kanzul Ummaal Vol 3 Pg. 688

It is purely Allah Ta'ala's Kindness, Mercy, Compassion, Forgiveness and Tolerance that He has not taken us to task and not seized us on our disobedience. Allah Ta'ala is All-Powerful. He has shown us His Power in different parts of the world: earthquakes, ash-clouds, tsunamis, hurricanes, fires and other disasters. ...He can destroy us too due to our excessive sins. It is just His Tolerance that we are still existing.

Do not engage in sins deliberately. Do not justify sins. Do not invite others to commit sins. A Muslim does not plan sin, does not deliberately move in the direction of disobedience, does not try to substantiate or legalise sins. A Muslim may mistakenly fall into some sin – but a true Muslim is restless and uncomfortable committing any sin and will not be at ease until he sincerely repents.

So we should turn towards Allah Ta'ala, make *l'tiraaf-e-qusoor* – acknowledge our sins and admit our weaknesses. If we do this, Allah Ta'ala will open the doors of Maghfirah (forgiveness) and grant us Hidayah, Taufeeq and His Protection.

May Allah Ta'ala forgive us all. May Allah Ta'ala make us of those who do good and who guide and call towards Jannah – in our speech and in our actions. May Allah Ta'ala make us keys to righteousness, that we open doors towards virtuous deeds and towards Jannah, and may Allah Ta'ala protect us from being keys to vice – that we open the doors to evil and become locks to goodness.

Rasulullah ﷺ said: **“Among the people are those who are keys to goodness and locks to evil. And from among the people**

are those who are keys to evil and locks to goodness. So glad tidings to the one who Allah puts the key to goodness in his hands, and destruction to the one who Allah puts the key to evil in his hands.”⁷⁴

This does not mean that Allah Ta’ala compels or forces a person. Allah Ta’ala clearly shows us the path of guidance and good, and the path of misguidance and evil:

وَهَدَيْنَاهُ السَّبِيلَ ۖ

“AND WE HAVE SHOWN HIM THE TWO WAYS (GOOD AND EVIL).”

[SURAH AL-BALAD 90 : 10]

Our actions are our choice. A person’s actions then make him one of the two keys. ...If we call towards good, we will gain the rewards of those who follow us in good. On the other hand, if we call to misguidance and sin, then we bear the burden of the sins of those who follow us, as well as our own sins. This is what is mentioned in the Ahadīth.⁷⁵ ...So let us be of those who invite towards Jannah.

May Allah Ta’ala have mercy upon us, guide us all and protect our Imaan in these times of great Fitnah.

⁷⁴ Sunan Ibn Majah

⁷⁵ Sahih Muslim

BRIDAL AND BABY SHOWERS

THERE ARE MANY CUSTOMS and trends which have their affiliation with the non-Muslim culture and lifestyle. Many Muslims, due to being afflicted with what appears to be a truly insecure and inferior complex, look towards and choose the customs and trends of the non-Muslims over that of the beautiful Sunnah. It seems as if the need is to secure a kind of acceptance amongst non-Muslims and just blend in with them, to the extent that we are not even recognised as Muslims.

Alhamdulillah, we have a perfect Deen. Allah Ta'ala presented a complete and perfect way of life for all mankind till the Day of Qiyamah:

الْيَوْمَ أَكْمَلْتُ لَكُمْ دِينَكُمْ وَأَتِمَمْتُ عَلَيْكُمْ نِعْمَتِي وَرَضِيتُ
لَكُمْ الْإِسْلَامَ دِينًا ط

**“... THIS DAY HAVE I PERFECTED YOUR RELIGION FOR YOU;
COMPLETED MY FAVOUR UPON YOU, AND HAVE CHOSEN FOR YOU ISLAM AS
YOUR RELIGION.”**

[SURAH AL-MAA'IDAH 5 : 4]

Our beautiful, perfect Deen also teaches us how to celebrate and how to grieve. There is guidance on Eid, Nikah, Walimah, birth and death. It is not for us to blindly follow others when we have been given the best direction to living life.

Unfortunately, bridal showers and baby showers have become synonymous with the Muslim lifestyle as it is with the non-Muslim lifestyle. Many may ask: *What is wrong with giving gifts, congratulating the bride-to-be or the new mother, or having a get together with friends?*

There is nothing wrong with giving the bride or the new mother, a gift, or congratulating the person. To give a gift and congratulate are from the teachings of Islam – and would draw rewards ... but there are conditions to be met in even these noble deeds. What is extremely wrong and objectionable is the background to these good deeds. They are not within the parameters of Shari’ah. **The picture of a typical bridal shower and baby shower is not typical with the Sunnah. It is typical with the non-Muslim way of life.** By following suit, we fall into the grave sin of “Tashabbu bil Kuffaar” (emulating the disbelievers). It is aligning oneself to those who have rejected Allah Ta’ala, who live their lives in disobedience and immorality.

NIKAH

Nikah is an Ibaadah and greatly rewarding if undertaken, adhering to the Sunnah. Pregnancy and the birth of a child also have their special requisites in Islam. However, the west has commercialized these noble occasions, and made them into money-making events. The sacredness of these occasions is forgotten.

Today, Nikahs have taken on a distinct mould of a Hollywood or Bollywood style wedding – where the bride is dressed to look like a Christian bride or a Bollywood actress – with no sign of Islam on her, and the groom is dressed in a suit and tie, looking like a

typical Christian groom. Adding insult to injury is the extravagance and open sin at the time of the wedding and Walimah. One's mind moves in the direction of the millions and millions who are suffering famine and starvation, who are refugees, who have no home, no water, no food, no clothing – but all this suffering is ignored just for some fleeting attention and praise.

All those hundreds of thousands of Rands wasted on draping a hall, on dressing chairs, on wine glasses, on musicians, photography, on flowers and wedding cards that are thrown away, etc. is money which could have been the means of alleviating the plight of *so many* suffering people, or it could have been spent in some avenue of Deen, securing for us tremendous rewards and goodness in both worlds.

...One brother handed me an elaborate invitation card for his daughter's wedding. I enquired as to the cost of the wedding card, and was told that each card cost R50. Advising him, I told him that almost everyone throws away wedding cards. People generally dispose of them. **So he should regard that as people throwing away hundreds of his R50 notes.** Would he throw R50 notes into the bin? No. However, the throwing away of those cards is equal to throwing away R50 notes. That same money could have been used in earning the Aakhirah.

Even those who are known to be religious will waste thousands on halls, on décor and so forth, sacrificing the pleasure of Allah Ta'ala and Rasulullah ﷺ. ...Those who project an image of Deen, who were meant to set the noble example of the Sunnah, who we expect are living the Sunnah – knowingly choose to forsake the Sunnah on such occasions. We should be ashamed of our pretence

and insincerity and sincerely repent for our failings in this regard. Simplicity, which is part of Imaan, is a rare sight in these times.

Hazrat 'Ayesha رَضِيَ اللهُ عَنْهَا related that Rasulallah ﷺ said: **“Verily, the most blessed Nikah is that which involves the least difficulty (expenditure).”**⁷⁶

We have the perfect Sunnah – the perfect way in the life of our Rasul ﷺ and in the lives of his companions, men and women رَضِيَ اللهُ عَنْهُمْ. We have what is superior to all other cultures yet we foolishly consider everything else to be more desirable. It shows great weakness if we give preference to the culture of the Christians, Jews and Idolators over the noble Sunnah of Rasulallah ﷺ. We are exchanging diamonds for stones... and what an unprofitable exchange this is! What a great loss!

Rasulallah ﷺ said: **“Whoever imitates a nation is from among them.”**⁷⁷ and: **“The one who imitates others is not from among us.”**⁷⁸ In another Hadīth, Rasulallah ﷺ said: **“A person is with whom he loves.”**⁷⁹ ...It is understood from the Ahadīth that a person will be raised on the Day of Judgment with those whom he emulated in this worldly life. May Allah Ta’ala save us from the disgrace and humiliation of being raised amongst those who He is displeased with.

⁷⁶ Al-Baihaqi / Mishkaat

⁷⁷ Sunan Abu Dawood

⁷⁸ Sunan Tirmidhi, Hadith: 2695

⁷⁹ Sahih Al-Bukhari

GIFTS

Emulating the non-Muslim culture is one downfall but there are many more that are found in Nikahs, bridal showers and baby showers. The non-Muslims have coined a novel concept of begging. It seems as if some, who are wealthy, have developed an art to begging. They even have a name for it. In the name of bridal showers, baby showers, registries, people gracefully and politely extend their hands, and they ask and take from others.

The bride-to-be chooses her gifts from exclusive stores that offer a “registry” or she unashamedly hands out a list of those items she wants gifted to her. In the process, she places pressure, inconvenience, financial difficulty and a great burden on others – to purchase those gifts that she has chosen. At the get-together, these gifts and other gifts are presented to the bride-to-be or mother-to-be, who opens them and shows them to all who are present – and each person can assess the kind of money that was spent on the gift given. Consider the wrongs in this:

- A person is forced to purchase gifts that the bride has chosen – which may be beyond one’s budget in spending.
- A person who gives something simple or inexpensive will feel ashamed and embarrassed, considering the manner in which gifts are being received and shown to others.

The Hadīth encourages giving gifts because giving gifts creates Muhabbah. Rasulullah ﷺ said: **“Give gifts to one another and you will love one another.”**⁸⁰

If Muhabbah is not created then this proves that either the giver or the receiver is insincere. Sometimes, people give with ulterior motives. On the other hand, there are many who request or are desirous of receiving, and there is a kind of greed for something. This request or expectation (Ishraaf) reveals insincerity from the one who is receiving.

A gift must be given happily and willingly – and should be received graciously and thankfully. This is the Sunnah. However, when we ask of people and we tell them what they must purchase, as in the case of registries, baby showers, etc. – people will give, but not everyone will be giving happily and willingly. Unfortunately, if some gift is given, which is not to our liking, then we receive it without any appreciation and thanks. We do not even thank the person. There is no courtesy and no politeness. This is our lamentable and pitiable condition, whereas the noble habit of Rasulullah ﷺ was to accept even humble items given to him as gifts, with appreciation and happiness.

Another aspect, which is no secret, is the immorality and shamelessness at such gatherings – with indecent talk, shameless dressing, inappropriate games, music, dancing and such filthy entertainment, that we would not want to bring onto our tongues. It is not permissible for a person to attend such gatherings. The Shari'ah instructs us:

⁸⁰ Sahih Al-Bukhari

**“IT IS NOT PERMISSIBLE TO BE PRESENT IN A GATHERING WHERE
ALLAH TA’ALA IS BEING DISOBEYED.”**

The same applies to men: Many men also arrange parties and other activities which are immoral and Haraam – whether at the time of Nikah or on other occasions. A person's presence at such functions and gatherings is aiding in promoting and endorsing what is not permissible. We are told not to assist each other in sin; rather assist in righteousness:

وَتَعَاوُنُوا عَلَى الْبِرِّ وَالتَّقْوَىٰ ۖ وَلَا تَعَاوُنُوا عَلَى الْإِثْمِ وَالْعُدْوَانِ ۚ

**“HELP EACH OTHER IN RIGHTEOUSNESS AND PIETY, AND DO NOT HELP EACH
OTHER IN SIN AND AGGRESSION.”**

[SURAH AL-MAA'IDAH 5 : 2]

A bride-to-be is known for her modesty and shyness, but all of this is lost in adopting the culture of the non-Muslims. Their dressing and their fashion nurtures immodesty. Added to this, these many sins are even publicized; photographs are taken and uploaded on social media – for all and sundry to view the level of our degeneration. **The heart bleeds at this miscarriage of the Sunnah. ...Nay, this abortion of the Sunnah. How will we meet our Beloved Nabi ﷺ on the Day of Judgment? How will we show our faces to the one whose entire life was sacrificed so that today we are the reciters of the Kalimah?**

We only stand to lose by adopting the culture of the non-Muslims. If we continue in this line and direction, we will lose the pleasure of Allah Ta’ala. We also stand to lose the companionship of Rasulullah ﷺ at the fountain of Kauthar on the Day of

Judgment; we stand to lose the great and wonderful rewards of practising upon and reviving the Sunnah; and we even stand to lose the success of our marriages due to having sacrificed the beautiful, noble Sunnah for the Hollywood and Bollywood culture and the Haraam that accompanies it.

If our allegiance is to Allah Ta'ala and His Rasul ﷺ, then there should be no delay in repentance and mending our ways and coming back to what is pure and beautiful – Islam and the Sunnah. In this, is the success of both worlds!

May Allah Ta'ala grant us the understanding, the concern and the Taufeeq of Amal. May Allah Ta'ala have mercy upon us and guide us to what is pleasing to Him and His Rasul ﷺ at all times.

THE END RESULT

IN A HADĪTH⁸¹, RASULULLAH ﷺ mentioned the creation of the human being and the end result of some people. The gist of the Hadīth is that sometimes a person spends almost his entire life doing those deeds which are characteristic of the people of Jannah, until there is only an arm span between him and Jannah. However, towards the end of his life, he commits Kufr and enters the fire, to remain therein eternally. May Allah Ta’ala protect us all.

On the other hand, another person may do the deeds characteristic of the people of Jahannum (hell) until he is only an arm span from Jahannum, yet near the end of his life, he brings Imaan in Allah Ta’ala, does righteous deeds and enters Jannah – to remain therein forever and ever.

The question may arise: **What is the benefit of good deeds, if at the time of death one can lose one’s Imaan?**

Once, when I was in the company of Hazrat Mufti Mahmood Hasan Gangohi رَحْمَةُ اللهِ عَلَيْهِ, Hazrat Mufti Saheb رَحْمَةُ اللهِ عَلَيْهِ explained this Hadīth and said that those people who suddenly lose their Imaan before death, or give up Islam openly, had in actual fact lost their Imaan long before that time. Due to their criticism of the Ahkaam (Laws) of Allah Ta’ala, or their condemnation of Islam and Shari’ah, or rejection of some teaching of Islam – all of which is frighteningly

⁸¹ Sahih Al-Bukhari, Hadith: 3208 and Sahih Muslim, Hadith: 2643

common in these days – they had already committed Kufr. Allah Ta’ala then exposes the person’s Kufr before death.

So the Kufr that was concealed or hidden in the person’s heart – despite his outward, pious actions such as Salaah, Zakaah, Hajj, ‘Umrah, etc. – is exposed at the time of his death. Before dying, he utters something or does something which is clearly Kufr and then dies in that condition and consequently enters the fire. His Kufr was not something sudden, it was perhaps even life-long. May Allah Ta’ala protect us all.

How many people pass their time in mocking, ridiculing and condemning the laws of Allah Ta’ala: the Hijaab and Niquaab, the laws of inheritance, Talaaq, the Command to lower the gaze, etc.? They belittle the noble teachings and practices of Rasulullah ﷺ like the beard, Miswaak, men wearing their pants above their ankles and so forth. This criticism and mockery are really directed to Allah Ta’ala since these are His Laws. Such an attitude has a destructive impact on one's Imaan – as outlined in the Hadīth.

On the other hand, another person may have been leading a life of Kufr, but at heart he may have admired the Islamic way of life – its purity, perfection and beauty. He may have appreciated and respected the Commandments of Allah Ta’ala and the teachings of Rasulullah ﷺ. Allah Ta’ala then creates the means for his guidance. He accepts Islam, dies on Imaan, gains salvation in the Hereafter and enters Jannah. There are many known incidents of people who accepted Islam in the latter stage of their lives and were also granted very blessed deaths.

The Hadīth does not mean that we should sit complacent, thinking that what has been destined will happen – whether Jannah or Jahannum. A person works and strives for his or her portion of the Hereafter. We should not allow shaytaan to make us use Taqdeer as an excuse to be lazy in the matter of Deen. Thousands of Sahabah-e-Kiraam رَضِيَ اللهُ عَنْهُمْ heard this narration, but we have never found any one of them giving up doing good, and giving up striving for the Akhirah. On the contrary, we find that they made very concerted efforts and they strived sincerely to earn the pleasure of Allah Ta’ala.

Allah Ta’ala has granted man intelligence and willpower; He has granted man guidance through His Ambiyaa عَلَيْهِمُ السَّلَام and His Kitaabs (revealed books). He has informed man as to what is right and what is wrong, what is Jannah and what is Jahannum, and what leads to each destination. The decision then rests with man. If he accepts, it is to his gain. If he rejects, it is to his loss.

مَنْ عَمِلَ صَالِحًا فَلِنَفْسِهِ ۖ وَمَنْ أَسَاءَ فَعَلَيْهَا ۚ وَمَا رَبُّكَ بِظَلَّامٍ لِلْعَبِيدِ ۝

‘WHOEVER WORKS RIGHTEOUSNESS BENEFITS HIS OWN SOUL; WHOEVER WORKS EVIL, IT IS AGAINST HIS OWN SOUL: NOR IS YOUR LORD EVER UNJUST (IN THE LEAST) TO HIS SERVANTS.’

[SURAH FUSSILAAT 41: 46]

May Allah Ta’ala grant us Hidayah, Istiqaamat on Deen, Ikhlās in all undertakings and death on Imaan. May Allah Ta’ala grant us the Taufeeq of learning Deen from our ‘Ulama-e-Haq so that we understand Deen correctly, value the beautiful teachings of Islam and work towards the goals of Allah Ta’ala’s Pleasure and Jannah.

THE INFLUENCE OF TELEVISION

ONE OF THE MANY SUNNATS of the Ambiyaa عَلَيْهِمُ السَّلَام is Hayaa – shame and modesty. This is a quality which is sorely missing in the lives of the majority of Muslims today, whereas it should be an outstanding characteristic and feature of all Muslims, whether young or old, married or un-married. The Hadīth states: **“Modesty is a branch of Imaan (faith).”**⁸²

Amongst the factors that cause great spiritual harm and corrodes and erodes character and morality, is the television. Television is such an evil that if our society only understood its reality and its harms, then there would be no excuse to watch. It takes away the Hayaa and shame of our men, women and children. The content of most television programmes is nothing but immodesty and indecency, which invites nothing but immodesty and indecency – into our homes, into our lives and into the lives of our children.

Sadly, this truth and reality seem to just pass over the understanding of even those Muslims who have some link with Deen. Many are regular with Salaah; they are seen in the Masjid; they are wearing the garb of the pious, yet they will also present flimsy and feeble excuses to view television programmes.

⁸² Sahih Al-Bukhari and Sahih Muslim

Let us consider this sin from the following perspective – which Alhamdulillah, has been a means of many getting rid of the television.

- If a person has to knock on your door and tell you: *‘I would like to use your lounge to commit adultery,’*
- Or a group of some friends have to request you: *‘We would like to use your home to gamble and enjoy our liquor,’*
- Or a group of youngsters have to tell you: *‘We have chosen your home as a venue for our partying, dancing, drug-taking and fornicating,’*
- Or a Christian family has to request you: *‘We would like to use your home as a venue for our church ceremony – the marriage of our daughter as well as the baptism of our grandchild. We have already obtained the consent of one of our priests,’*
- Or some idol-worshippers have to suggest: *‘We would like to carry out some of our religious rites in your home. We would like to bring our idols also. You are more than welcome to observe and participate in our rites.’*

Many Muslims, on hearing such requests, will get very angry; will express disgust – if not swear and curse such suggestions. However, these very same Muslims, who will even resort to swearing and cursing such proposals, invite into their homes all of the above and much more, with their viewing of television, hiring or purchasing of English and Hindi films and DVDs, and

downloading porn and other films from the Internet. There is so much of adultery, partying and other filth that we just welcome into our homes – via the television and now via the Internet – not realising the grave consequences.

Just to give you one example and this is just the tip of the iceberg – and it is said with the intention of removing the blindfold that most of us wear.

A father of four children mentioned to me that he got rid of the televisions from his home, and he thereafter explained why. He said that late one night he heard strange noises from his children's room. On opening the door of the room, he found their television switched on. ...This is our concept of modesty: parents have their own television, to view all kinds of filthy films and indecent shows in privacy, and children have their own television to view all kinds of immorality in privacy – نَعُوذُ بِاللَّهِ.

The father mentioned that there were dirty and obscene scenes of naked people on the television screen. He mentioned that it was absolutely filthy and that it really shocked him; but what had him even more shaken was that his children were all undressed, engaging in the same kind of indecent acts. They were imitating the pornography that they were viewing. He said himself, that until then he had not considered the harm of television. It took that kind of incident to wake him up. ...This is just one example of so many. Do we want to face something similar?

...Do we even care to know what our sons and daughters are doing in the secrecy of their rooms? The fact that many demand that no

one 'invade' their space and privacy to the extent of having 'No Entry' signs on their doors, should have parents a little more than concerned... especially if they are viewing television, have access to the internet, etc.

Many people have written to me and they related that after watching certain films or programmes, the desire came strongly into their hearts to take drugs, drink liquor, murder their parents, engage in homosexuality or adultery, commit suicide, rape, and so much else.

Moreover, with sins like television and evil, lustful glancing, Allah Ta'ala removes the love between husband and wife, and even ones children become disobedient. There are many husbands who entertain thoughts of and fantasize of other women when with their wives – and they will, especially when they are watching different actresses and television presenters. Many wives are guilty of the same infidelity having seen or socialised with ghair-mahareem⁸³. Many women are so infatuated and obsessed with some soccer player or cricket player that they become dissatisfied with their husbands, and spend their time fantasizing. ...So often, there is disloyalty and betrayal from both spouses.

Had the person not viewed all those ghair-mahareem on the television screen, computer screen, tablet screen and cell-phone screen, and had he lowered his gaze in real life situations, then he would not have desired that which he cannot have, and there would not have been dissatisfaction with his (or her) spouse.

⁸³ ghair-mahram: one whom a man or woman could marry at some stage of his or her life.

Furthermore we complain: *There is no Barkat (blessing) in our homes; there is no Barkat in our wealth; there is no Barkat in our time. Our children are rebellious. The husband is having an extra-marital relationship. The daughter has accepted Christianity or has become an atheist. The son is on drugs ...* and the list of complaints does not end. Who is to blame except the one who brought all of this Haraam into the home by purchasing the television and exposing the family to so much of Haraam?

...Great 'Ulama became Bay'at upon the hands of Hazrat Maulana Hakeem Fakhrudeen رَحْمَةُ اللهِ عَلَيْهِ. He mentioned that there was a time, that with the rising and setting of the sun, he saw nothing but Noor in Surat⁸⁴. The atmosphere was one of Noor and Sukoon. The days commenced with Salaah, Tilawat and Zikrullah. However, after the cinemas, televisions and videos flooded Surat, there was nothing but Zulmat – darkness. With the diversion towards entertainment, Ibaadah becomes a forgotten duty.

One Wali of Allah Ta'ala, on visiting a home, mentioned that he perceived the sin of Zina (adultery) from the walls of that home. He was able to recognize that due to the purity of his heart. The residents of that home were not indulging in adultery but they were watching the sin on television.

When fire burns against a white wall, it blackens the wall. The Ahle-Dil⁸⁵, with their purified hearts, see the fire of sins which has burnt and blackened the white hearts of the Muslims. Would that we take lesson and take measures to protect ourselves and our children! Allah Ta'ala commands us:

⁸⁴ Surat : Well-known city of Gujarat, India

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا قُوا أَنْفُسَكُمْ وَأَهْلِيكُمْ نَارًا وَقُودُهَا النَّاسُ وَالْحِجَارَةُ

**“O PEOPLE OF IMAAN! SAVE YOURSELVES AND YOUR FAMILIES FROM A FIRE
WHOSE FUEL IS MEN AND STONES...”**

[SURAH AT-TAHREEM 66 : 6]

In a Hadīth, Rasulullah ﷺ said: **“A man is a shepherd over his family; he is accountable for their welfare. A woman is a shepherdess over her husband’s household and children; she is accountable for their welfare. ...Be careful! All of you are shepherds, and all of you shall be accountable for their flocks.”**⁸⁵

May Allah Ta’ala awaken our hearts and grant us the concern and the courage to get rid of the television and other Haraam from our homes.

⁸⁵ Ahle-Dil: People of heart (who have a special connection with Allah Ta’ala)

⁸⁶ Sahih Al-Bukhari and Sahih Muslim

TRAVELING WITHOUT A MAHRAM⁸⁷

IN THE EARLY YEARS, Allah Ta'ala granted us the opportunity of performing Hajj. We departed from Johannesburg for Jeddah. At 6 a.m. an announcement was made that we were landing in Brussels. Where we were supposed to land and where we ended up! ...There was some problem due to the sanctions against South Africa because of Apartheid.

We spent one night in Brussels and the next day we flew to Beirut. At that time, Beirut was known as the sin city. Unfortunately, the hotel that we were booked into, by the airline, also had song and dance. The second night was spent in Beirut and the next day we left Beirut only to be taken to Athens. So we reached Athens on the third day. None of these cities were on our itinerary.

There are always lessons derived from travel, and in that trip, there were women who were traveling alone. They had no husband, no father, no brother – no Mahram accompanying them. Being alone, and in that unanticipated situation, moving from one foreign city to another, they experienced a lot of difficulty. There was also no technology as we have in these days, of cell phones, tablets, WiFi, etc., where a person can keep in touch with family and be updated on any situation. As passengers, none of us really knew where we would be taken next and what would happen thereafter.

⁸⁷ Mahram: immediate, trustworthy male relative with whom marriage is not permissible, or the husband.

That experience made me reflect over the Command of Allah Ta'ala, that a woman must travel with a Mahram – that is, if it is the Safr distance.

Alhamdulillah, we find that Islam prioritises the safety, chastity and well-being of women. Allah Ta'ala has established various laws which offer a shield and protection for women – so that they are not exploited, abused, harassed, or left alone and vulnerable. Unfortunately, modernists, feminists and others take these same beautiful laws and present them as prejudiced and biased and as undermining women – نَعُوذُ بِاللَّهِ.

...There is a condition found in certain people called colour blindness. A person who is colour blind has difficulty or inability to distinguish between certain colours; usually between the red and green. This condition arises because of some kind of defect in the eye nerves. Similarly, we have people with the condition of spiritual colour blindness – who cannot see the colour of Truth, due to a weakness or defect in their spiritual hearts. They see the colour of falsehood and thus do not appreciate the beauty and perfection of Islam.

In these times, we read and hear of women who are promised work with high salaries and other perks, in foreign countries. They fall for the bait and travel out on their own, or travel with strangers who give them all kinds of assurances. However, their passports are thereafter taken away from them, and they are then drawn into prostitution, pornography and drugs.

Human trafficking has become the fastest growing criminal operation in the world. An article, which presented statistics regarding human trafficking, stated that the largest group of victims are women and young girls – who are bought and sold like slaves. Besides prostitution, many are used as cheap labour – which also entails very oppressive and abusive treatment. They live in harsh conditions, without any family support or protection. They are not given proper food and clothing and suffer various physical sicknesses and emotional trauma.

We have also read of planes being hijacked and of the distress that passengers have to endure. ...Presently, throughout the world, Muslims are being targeted due to Islamophobia. There is so much of aggression against Muslims. Muslim women especially have been harassed, attacked, beaten and even killed. Here, in South Africa, rape and hijackings are everyday occurrences.

Allah Ta'ala is our Creator and knows our vulnerability as well as the evil that is inherent in human beings, which leads to exploitation and injustices. His Laws are to protect us as well as curb the evil within us. We should appreciate His guidance and understand that it is best for us.

...In this day and age, travel is promoted and advertised because it has become a business and a commercial venture. Advertisements seek to create the desire within us to visit other countries and experience different cultures. 'Globe-trotting' is a term that has been coined for those who travel often and it is looked upon as something glamorous.

Added to this, nowadays, the means of travel have become so advanced that you just board a plane, and within a matter of hours you can be in a country, thousands of miles away. Similarly, we find so many people traveling locally – because of the ease of flight travel.

Traveling is not Haraam. If it is for a noble purpose – such as acquiring the knowledge of Deen, it is extremely rewarding. If it is to engage in Haraam, then of course, such traveling will not be endorsed by the Shari’ah. Many people now travel with the sole intention of participating in some Haraam entertainment, such as attending concerts and other entertainment places and events.

Sadly, we find that many Muslim women are also carried away by the western culture and they too start “living it up” by working in foreign countries, traveling for business, or for leisure and pleasure, or even to visit family or attend a Nikah or Walimah – and they do so without a Mahram accompanying them. Often, it is plain disregard and disrespect for Allah Ta’ala’s Commandments.

We should consider and deeply reflect over the Ahādīth of Rasulullah ﷺ: **“It is not permissible for a woman who believes in Allah and the Last Day to travel the distance of one day, except with a Mahram.”**⁸⁸

In another Hadīth, Rasulullah ﷺ said: **“No woman should travel except with a Mahram and no man may visit her unless she has a Mahram with her.”**⁸⁹

⁸⁸ Sahih Muslim

⁸⁹ Sahih Al-Bukhari

A woman should be accompanied by her Mahram when traveling. The Mahram too must be of sound and good character. Shari'ah forbids traveling with a Mahram or being alone with him – whether he is one's father, brother, uncle, nephew or anyone else, if he is of loose morals, corrupt character, and a risk to one's chastity and modesty. Although he is a Mahram, he is now the danger and threat. Traveling alone with him or being alone with him should be avoided.

These Ahādīth and the clear ruling found in them takes into account all forms of travel. Of course there are exceptions to the rule and this exception would arise when there is some emergency. But generally, in these times, the reasons for traveling without a Mahram are flimsy and carry no weight.

Some women say that they do not have a Mahram for traveling long distances. They should understand that this is Allah Ta'ala's choice for them – and there is wisdom and great khayr (good) in all His Decisions. We need to nurture the qualities of a true Believer. In this case, the qualities of Tafweez⁹⁰, Sabr, Ridha bil Qadha⁹¹ and Dua. By doing so, great rewards will be secured.

Allah Ta'ala mentions the response of His sincere servants:

إِنَّمَا كَانَ قَوْلَ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ إِذَا دُعُوا إِلَى اللَّهِ وَرَسُولِهِ لِيَحْكُمَ بَيْنَهُمْ أَنْ يَقُولُوا سَمِعْنَا وَأَطَعْنَا ط
 وَأُولَئِكَ هُمُ الْمُفْلِحُونَ ۝
 وَمَنْ يَطِيعِ اللَّهَ وَرَسُولَهُ وَيَخْشِ اللَّهَ وَيَتَّقِهِ فَأُولَئِكَ هُمُ الْفَائِزُونَ ۝

⁹⁰ Tafweez: Accepting the Decisions of Allah Ta'ala

⁹¹ Ridha bil Qadha: Being happy with the decisions of Allah Ta'ala

**“THE ONLY REPLY OF THE (TRUE) BELIEVERS, WHEN THEY ARE SUMMONED TO
ALLAH AND HIS MESSENGER, THAT HE (THE MESSENGER)
MAY JUDGE BETWEEN THEM, IS THAT THEY SAY, ‘WE HEAR AND OBEY.’ SUCH
PEOPLE ARE THE SUCCESSFUL.
WHOEVER OBEYS ALLAH AND HIS MESSENGER AND HAS AWE OF HIM AND
OBSERVES TAQWA FOR HIS SAKE, THEN SUCH PEOPLE ARE THE
VICTORIOUS.”**

[SURAH AN-NOOR 24 : 51 / 52]

May Allah Ta’ala grant us the concern and the understanding,
grant us appreciation and the Taufeeq to practise on the beautiful
way of life called Islam.

INSULATING THE HEART

WHILST IN THE COMPANY OF ONE'S SHAYKH, or when in good company, or during the month of Ramadaan, we find an undeniably positive effect in respect to our overall behavior and in our relationship with Allah Ta'ala. It suddenly becomes easy to perform good deeds and abstain from sins. Our hearts become light and happy, after being relieved of the terrible burden of sins. Noor and Sakeenah⁹² permeate the heart and life becomes so pleasant. Alhamdulillah.

Eventually we leave the company of the Shaykh or Ramadaan passes. We then find ourselves susceptible and vulnerable to the invitations and temptations to sins, and we fall prey to nafs and shaytaan. We ask: Why? How come? ...We were slowly but surely improving ... and then we start stumbling, faltering, falling ... and sometimes we are just floored by nafs, and even land up in the gutters of sins!

We, ourselves, are the reason for our weaknesses and failings. While in the company of the Shaykh or during Ramadaan, we do not develop sufficient Taqwa to insulate ourselves against sins and against nafs and shaytaan. The company of the pious and righteous, as well as the month of Ramadaan, offer a special protection. However, we generally visit or keep company with the Shaykh for short periods of time, and Ramadaan visits us once a year. The time certainly comes when we have to face the many challenges

outside the company of the pious and outside of Ramadaan. **It is therefore necessary to very strongly insulate the heart and soul against the harsh climate of sins.**

To understand this better, let us take the following example: It is an extremely cold winter's day. While we are indoors, we keep warm because our homes offer some kind of insulation. The walls and roof provide some protection, the carpet adds to that protection, and if we sit near the fireplace or heater, we will enjoy the additional warmth. However, when we have to go outside, we obviously cannot carry the heater with us.

If we have to go outdoors, then knowing the extreme temperature outside, we adopt different measures to protect ourselves. In order to keep warm, while we are outdoors, we first insulate ourselves by wearing warm clothing, thick jackets, warm hats, socks, gloves and so forth. We may even drink some hot soup or any hot drink to warm ourselves from the inside. ...If we adopt all these means prior to leaving home, we will be shielded against the icy, bitter cold. ...We have heard and read of people who climb snow-covered mountains. What do they do? Do they carry heaters with them? No. They insulate themselves with warm, thermal clothing.

Similarly, while in the company of the Mashaa`ikh or during the blessed month of Ramadaan, we must do our best to insulate ourselves with the love of Allah Ta'ala and with the qualities of Taqwa, Sabr, Shukr, Zuhd⁹³, Tawaadhu, etc.

⁹² Sakeenah: tranquility

⁹³ Zuhd: Asceticism / renunciation of the world

Sometimes we take these beautiful opportunities for granted. We should have the correct intentions when keeping the company of the Ahlullah. An 'Aalim had asked Hazrat Maulana Ashraf Ali Thanwi رَحْمَةُ اللهِ عَلَيْهِ: *"What intention should we have when sitting in the company of the Shaykh or in the company of any pious person?"*

Hazrat رَحْمَةُ اللهِ عَلَيْهِ replied: *"Intend to obtain the full benefit of Suhbah. This includes Ilm, Islaah, the Taufeeq of Amal, the noble qualities of the Shaykh, etc. In the company of the sincere and pious, one will only find benefit."*

It is in their company and from their hearts that we draw the the love of Allah Ta'ala, which is our insulation and protection against the demands of nafs and the attacks of shaytaan.

When we sit in these Majaalis, we should not think that it is just a bayaan... that it is just another talk. The bayaan will take place, but even if there is no bayaan, the silence of those who are Kaamil⁹⁴, generates a Noor, a light. This enters through the eyes and ears, and lights up the hearts with the love of Allah Ta'ala. It gives the person strength in his Imaan. Thereafter, when the person goes outside, that spiritual warmth is with him – like the person who wears his jersey and jacket, warm hat and warm socks.

It is not possible to be with the Shaykh twenty four hours of every day. He has a life to lead. He will be teaching at the Madrasah, giving talks at the Masjid, traveling out in the Khidmat of Deen,

⁹⁴ Kaamil: accomplished

and so forth. What does a person do at these times? He keeps himself protected, like how a person covers himself with a blanket or wears a heavy jacket in the cold winter weather.

In the Majlis of the Shaykh, we also insulate the heart with Zikrullah and with the attribute of Ihsaan – the conscious awareness of Allah Ta’ala. We develop the awareness that Allah Ta’ala is All-Seeing, All-Hearing, All-Knowing, All-Aware – that nothing escapes the knowledge of Allah Ta’ala... nothing escapes the Sight of Allah Ta’ala. This quality of Ihsaan is what we take with us wherever we go.

وَهُوَ مَعَكُمْ أَيْنَ مَا كُنْتُمْ ط

“... AND HE IS WITH YOU WHEREVER YOU ARE...”

[SURAH AL-HADEED 57 : 4]

The Shaykh cannot be with us all the time, but we can maintain the conscious awareness of Allah Ta’ala’s presence. If the person has to go to the bazaar, marketplace, university, college, etc. he goes well-insulated with the quality of Ihsaan.

Allah Ta’ala has made it so easy, that our insulation is also found in our Salaah, which needs to be established five times a day. For the men, Salaah must be performed in congregation, in the Masjid. Allah Ta’ala says:

إِنَّ الصَّلَاةَ تَنْهَى عَنِ الْفَحْشَاءِ وَالْمُنْكَرِ ط

“... VERILY SALAAH RESTRAINS FROM SHAMELESSNESS AND EVIL...”

[SURAH AN-ANKABUT 29 : 45]

For the full benefit and protection that Salaah offers, we need to learn the Masaa'il⁹⁵ of Salaah and develop and improve our Salaah. There should be concentration, submission and humbleness.

Practising upon the Sunnah, recitation of Qur'aan Shareef and deep-hearted Dua for protection are all A'maal which offer great insulation. My Shaykh, Hazrat Maulana Shah Hakeem Muhammad Akhtar Saheb رَحْمَةُ اللهِ عَلَيْهِ would repeatedly make Dua: *"O Allah! Wherever I am – whether on earth or in the skies – preserve my Taqwa at all times."*

Together with all of this, we need to rid our homes of all those elements which will nullify the spirituality that we develop and the insulation we build up in the company of the Shaykh. **We need to get rid of the television, give up the music, throw out the filthy magazines and novels and remove whatever other Haraam which pollutes our homes and our lives.**

The Suhbah of the Shaykh, the beautiful month of Ramadaan, the I'tikaaf⁹⁶, etc., all facilitate ease in practising on Deen and are opportune times to insulate our hearts and souls. Thus, when Ramadaan ends or we leave the company of our Mashaa'ikh, then despite the harsh climate of sins on the outside and all around us, Allah Ta'ala will protect us and assist us in abstaining from evil, because we made a concerted effort to insulate ourselves against the severe and dreadful environment of Fitnah.

⁹⁵ Masaa'il: rules

⁹⁶ I'tikaaf: Seclusion during the month of Ramadaan.

...Once I was at the airport, waiting to board the plane. We all know that the airport is a place of much Fitnah. One has to guard the gaze, the ears, the heart and the mind much more than in other places. There was a young man whose ears were plugged with earphones and he was listening to something. When he saw me, he came and made Salaam to me and said that he had downloaded the Zikr programmes onto his phone and was listening to the Zikr. He mentioned that whenever he travels out, he keeps listening to the Zikr programmes because he finds them to be a protection from sins. ...This was a measure of maintaining that insulation. Alhamdulillah.

To whatever extent we can, we should try to regularly attend Deeni programmes, listen to the cds, read the books and Malfuzaat of the Shaykh, and maintain some connection through correspondence, or telephone the Shaykh from time to time. This will be very conducive to one's progress, Insha-Allah.

Some Mureeds are content to just wait for their Shaykh to come from Pakistan, India or some other part of the world. They say: *"We will make our Islaah when the Shaykh visits."* The Shaykh may only visit once a year. Also, he may be in one's city for one week or even less. Then he is gone and the rest of the year passes. What should be done?

If the person says: *"I will not attend the Majlis or programmes of any other Shaykh. I will not accept the Nasihah of any other Shaykh,"* then shaytaan will say: *"This is a good candidate for me! This is easy prey because this person has got no Shaykh for the next eleven months."* Shaytaan will pounce on him!

Suhbah is something that has to be on a continuous basis. We should attend the Majaalis of the Mashaa'ikh who are local. If for some reason there are not many Majaalis in the area or there are no Mashaa'ikh in one's vicinity, then take the Kitaabs of the Shaykh or other Mashaa'ikh and read them, or listen to the cds, or the programmes via audio-streaming. This will keep a person insulated against the mischief of nafs and the evil schemes of shaytaan; otherwise the person will become like the lone sheep which becomes an easy prey for the wolf.

May Allah Ta'ala grant us the understanding and the Taufeeq of practising, and grant us well-insulated hearts.

THE WEALTH OF TIME

THIS LIFE IS A JOURNEY. We are all on a journey and we are traveling all the time. Even if the person is a 'couch potato', and he is passing his life in inactivity and idleness, he too is traveling. If the person is sitting, lying down or sleeping, he too is traveling. The person is in a car: The car is moving and covering distance, and simultaneously, the journey of life too continues. The person's life is moving on and on.

One breath follows another. And every breath of life is part of that journey. Seconds are ticking away. Minutes slip through the hourglass of time. Days and nights bring a close to weeks, and weeks bring a close to months and months bring a close to the years – until finally our lives come to a close. Hazrat Hasan Basri رَحْمَةُ اللهِ عَلَيْهِ had so aptly said: ***"O Son of Aadam! You are nothing but a number of days. Whenever a day passes, a part of you is gone."*** ...Never to return!

Every day, every week, every month is part of the journey – like how a person travels 10 kms, 100 kms, 500 kms, 1000 kms.... Every passing year of life is like a station that we reach. And no one knows how many stations he has to travel through before he arrives at his destination. ...For some, there is just one station – and they die at the tender age of one; some stop at ten stations and at the age of ten, they disembark. Others have to travel through fifty stations, sixty stations, even one hundred stations in life before they reach the end of the journey.

Most of us have the experience of flight travel or even traveling by train. We stop here and there in transit and then we arrive at the destination. The pilot informs the passengers when the plane begins its descent for landing, and when the plane lands and comes to a standstill, the pilot announces that all passengers must disembark. ...This is the reality of life. When we reach the end of this worldly life, the Command is given that the soul must now disembark. And we have already seen so many disembark: seniors and juniors, rich and poor, kings, presidents, subjects – **all have to disembark... whether the person likes to or not.**

Therefore, we have to be thrifty with time; we have to be prudent and cautious in regard to time. Use it productively and constructively, usefully and efficiently. Time can be likened to the root of a young tree – of a sapling. If a person looks after the young tree and waters the root, it will grow into a big tree, with its branches and leaves spreading out, providing extensive shelter and bearing a lot of fruit.

Similarly, when the person takes care of his life and the precious commodity of time, that time bears fruit because the person carried out good deeds in the time given to him, engaging himself in Salaah, Zikrullah, Tilawah, in the Khidmat (service) of Deen; spending his days in fasting, in giving Zakaah and Sadaqah, serving the creation, striving in earning Halaal sustenance, abstaining from sins, controlling his gaze when in the shopping centres, markets, universities, colleges, or wherever else, and controlling his heart from the evil desires of the nafs and the whisperings of shaytaan. All of these noble deeds were done in time.

His tree of life then bears different kinds of fruit, and he will enjoy these fruits in the grave and in the Hereafter. On the Day of Qiyamah, he will also enjoy the extensive shade which his good deeds will provide for him, Insha-Allah. The real dividends and the real earnings will be in Jannah, where he will enjoy its never-ending bounties. In describing Jannah, Allah Ta'ala has said: *'I have prepared for My pious servants which the eye has not seen, and the ear has not heard, and no human heart has ever perceived...'*⁹⁷

The greatest of all bounties, will be experienced in Jannah, when the person will behold the beauty of Allah Ta'ala with his own eyes. **سُبْحَانَ اللَّهِ**

*“That veil, which was covering Allah Ta'ala's
Countenance, will be removed.
Now will be the time to smile for those
who took that grief on their hearts,
and restrained themselves from all evil.”*

As for the person who falls for the temptations of nafs and shaytaan, he will have to deal with the consequences of squandering the wealth of life and wasting the fortune of time. His is a bad investment, where the shares drop completely. He may be left with a meagre 20% or 10 %, or he may end up with nothing. If his life was spent in Kufr⁹⁸ and his end was on Kufr, the net result is the fire of Jahannum – May Allah Ta'ala save us. If it was spent in sins, then we have been warned of punishment in the grave as well as punishment in the Hereafter.

Allah Ta'ala presents the analogy of a tree in the Qur'aan Shareef:

⁹⁷ Sahih Muslim

⁹⁸ Kufr : Disbelief

أَلَمْ تَرَ كَيْفَ ضَرَبَ اللَّهُ مَثَلًا كَلِمَةً طَيِّبَةً كَشَجَرَةٍ طَيِّبَةٍ أَصْلُهَا ثَابِتٌ وَفَرْعُهَا فِي السَّمَاءِ ۚ
تُؤْتِي أُكْلَهَا كُلَّ حِينٍ ۖ بِإِذْنِ رَبِّهَا ۖ وَيَضْرِبُ اللَّهُ الْأَمْثَالَ لِلنَّاسِ لَعَلَّهُمْ يَتَذَكَّرُونَ ۝

“HAVE YOU NOT SEEN HOW ALLAH HAS SET FORTH A PARABLE: A GOOD WORD IS LIKE A GOOD TREE, HAVING ITS ROOT FIRM AND ITS BRANCHES IN THE SKY. IT BRINGS ITS FRUITS AT ALL TIMES WITH THE WILL OF ITS LORD. ALLAH SETS FORTH THE PARABLES FOR THE PEOPLE, SO THAT THEY MAY TAKE LESSON.

[SURAH IBRAHEEM 14 : 24/25]

Allah Ta’ala likens the Believer’s Imaan and his deeds to a tree, with roots, deeply entrenched; a trunk which is strong and sturdy; branches, extending high up, as well as producing fruit which can be enjoyed at all times. In contrast, Allah Ta’ala likens the disbeliever and his deeds to a bad tree. The roots of the tree are not fixed and not entrenched, and does not stand the test of time.

وَمَثَلُ كَلِمَةٍ خَبِيثَةٍ كَشَجَرَةٍ خَبِيثَةٍ اجْتُثَّتْ مِنْ فَوْقِ الْأَرْضِ مَا لَهَا مِنْ قَرَارٍ ۝

“AND THE PARABLE OF AN EVIL WORD IS THAT OF AN EVIL TREE UPROOTED FROM THE SURFACE OF THE EARTH, HAVING NO STABILITY.”

[SURAH IBRAHEEM 14: 26]

The deeds of the disbeliever are described as:

مَثَلُ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا بِرَبِّهِمْ أَعْمَالُهُمْ كَرَمَادٍ اشْتَدَّتْ بِهِ الرِّيحُ فِي يَوْمٍ عَاصِفٍ ۖ لَا يَقْدِرُونَ مِمَّا كَسَبُوا عَلَى شَيْءٍ ۚ ذَٰلِكَ هُوَ الصَّلَالُ الْبَعِيدُ ۝

“THE DEEDS OF THOSE WHO REFUSE TO BELIEVE IN THEIR LORD ARE LIKE ASHES BLOWN AWAY BY THE WIND ON A STORMY DAY. THEY WILL NOT BE ABLE TO GAIN ANYTHING OUT OF WHAT THEY DID. THAT IS THE FARTHEST POINT OF STRAYING AWAY FROM THE RIGHT PATH.”

[SURAH IBRAHEEM 14: 18]

Their deeds are wasted due to their disbelief in Allah Ta'ala. Thus their time of life is wasted and no good awaits them in the Hereafter. ...When time is lost, life is lost. Sometimes the Hereafter is lost. What a great loss if a person loses out the opportunity of making real investments – which would bring him great, great profits in both worlds. What sorrow if a person reaches the Akhirah as a pauper, or worse, as a loser – losing out on Jannah forever.

All the money in the world cannot buy the seconds of the past. All the forces of the world cannot halt the march of time or arrest and detain time. So let us not waste the remaining time of life on those things which will not benefit us in any way. Sins do not benefit in any way; rather they harm us. And futile actions are stepping stones to sins and should be completely avoided.

Let us contemplate over the words of Rasulullah ﷺ and reflect over which category we are in: **“The intelligent one is he who suppresses his desires and practises for what is after death, and the foolish one is he who makes his nafs follow its desires and (he) places hope on Allah.”**⁹⁹

May Allah Ta'ala grant us the Taufeeq of preparing for the journey to the Akhirah, grant us death on Imaan and grant us Jannah without any reckoning.

⁹⁹ Tirmidhi and Ibn Majah

An Excerpt from the book
“SEEKING THE SHADE OF THE ARSH -
GUIDANCE FOR THE YOUTH”
By Hazrat Maulana Yunus Patel Saheb (Rahmatullahi ‘alayh)

ON ONE OCCASION, when I was addressing a group of young boys, I explained to them: The word “you” is in “youth”. And you are presently in youth. Your youth is in your hands. Now it is left to YOU to safeguard ‘you’ in your youth or destroy ‘you’ in your youth.

If you safeguard your youth, Allah Ta’ala will give you respect and dignity. You will enjoy good health – both physical and spiritual. You will enjoy a wholesome, happy life. There will be success in both worlds.

Allah Ta’ala promises you the noble and enviable position of being in the Shade of His Arsh (Throne) on the Day of Qiyamah. Seek this special honour and privilege in your youth!

To download or read online, visit www.yunuspatel.co.za